

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

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NO NAME.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c.

BETWEEN THE SCENES.

I.

FROM NORAH VANSTONE TO MR. PENDRIL.

"Westmorland House, Kensington,
"August 14th, 1846.

"DEAR MR. PENDRIL,—The date of this letter will show you that the last of many hard partings is over. We have left Combe-Raven; we have said farewell to home.

"I have been thinking seriously of what you said to me, on Wednesday, before you went back to town. I entirely agree with you, that Miss Garth is more shaken by all she has gone through for our sakes, than she is herself willing to admit; and that it is my duty, for the future, to spare her all the anxiety that I can, on the subject of my sister and myself. This is very little to do for our dearest friend, for our second mother. Such as it is, I will do it with all my heart.

"But, forgive me for saying that I am as far as ever from agreeing with you about Magdalen. I am so sensible, in our helpless position, of the importance of your assistance; so anxious to be worthy of the interest of my father's trusted adviser and oldest friend, that I feel really and truly disappointed with myself for differing with you—and yet I do differ. Magdalen is very strange, very unaccountable, to those who don't know her intimately. I can understand that she has innocently misled you; and that she has presented herself, perhaps, under her least favourable aspect. But, that the clue to her language and her conduct on Wednesday last, is to be found in such a feeling towards the man who has ruined us, as the feeling at which you hinted, is what I cannot and will not believe of my sister. If you knew, as I do, what a noble nature she has, you would not be surprised at this obstinate resistance of mine to your opinion. Will you try to alter it? I don't mind what Mr. Clare says: he believes in nothing. But I attach a very serious importance to what you say; and, kind as I know your motives to be, it distresses me to think you are doing Magdalen an injustice.

"Having relieved my mind of this confession, I may now come to the proper object of my

letter. I promised, if you could not find leisure time to visit us to-day, to write and tell you all that happened after you left us. The day has passed, without our seeing you. So I open my writing-case, and perform my promise.

"I am sorry to say that three of the women-servants—the housemaid, the kitchenmaid, and even our own maid (to whom I am sure we have always been kind)—took advantage of your having paid them their wages to pack up and go, as soon as your back was turned. They came to say good-by with as much ceremony, and as little feeling, as if they were leaving the house under ordinary circumstances. The cook, for all her violent temper, behaved very differently: she sent up a message to say that she would stop and help us to the last. And Thomas (who has never yet been in any other place than ours) spoke so gratefully of my dear father's unvarying kindness to him; and asked so anxiously to be allowed to go on serving us, while his little savings lasted, that Magdalen and I forgot all formal considerations, and both shook hands with him. The poor lad went out of the room crying. I wish him well; I hope he will find a kind master and a good place.

"The long, quiet, rainy evening out of doors—our last evening at Combe-Raven—was a sad trial to us. I think winter-time would have weighed less on our spirits: the drawn curtains, and the bright lamps, and the companionable fires would have helped us. We were only five in the house altogether—after having once been so many! I can't tell you how dreary the grey daylight looked, towards seven o'clock, in the lonely rooms, and on the noiseless staircase. Surely, the prejudice in favour of long summer evenings, is the prejudice of happy people? We did our best. We kept ourselves employed, and Miss Garth helped us. The prospect of preparing for our departure, which had seemed so dreadful earlier in the day, altered into the prospect of a refuge from ourselves, as the evening came on. We each tried at first to pack up in our own rooms—but the loneliness was more than we could bear. We carried all our possessions down stairs, and heaped them on the large dining-table, and so made our preparations together, in the same room. I am sure we have taken nothing away which does not properly belong to us:

"Having already mentioned to you my own

conviction that Magdalen was not herself when you saw her on Wednesday, I feel tempted to stop here, and give you an instance in proof of what I say. The little circumstance happened on Wednesday night, just before we went up to our rooms.

"After we had packed our dresses and our birthday presents, our books and our music, we began to sort our letters, which had got confused from being all placed on the table together. Some of my letters were mixed with Magdalen's, and some of hers with mine. Among these last, I found a card, which had been given to my sister early in the year, by an actor who managed an amateur theatrical performance in which she took a part. The man had given her the card, containing his name and address, in the belief that she would be invited to many more amusements of the same kind, and in the hope that she would recommend him as a superintendent on future occasions. I only relate these trifling particulars to show you how little worth keeping such a card could be, in such circumstances as ours. Naturally enough, I threw it away from me across the table, meaning to throw it on the floor. It fell short, close to the place in which Magdalen was sitting. She took it up, looked at it, and immediately declared that she would not have had this perfectly worthless thing destroyed for the world. She was almost angry with me, for having thrown it away; almost angry with Miss Garth for asking what she could possibly want with it! Could there be any plainer proof than this, that our misfortunes—falling so much more heavily on her than on me—have quite unbinged her, and worn her out? Surely her words and looks are not to be interpreted against her, when she is not sufficiently mistress of herself to exert her natural judgment—when she shows the unreasonable petulance of a child on a question which is not of the slightest importance.

"A little after eleven we went up-stairs to try if we could get some rest.

"I drew aside the curtain of my window, and looked out. Oh, what a cruel last night it was; no moon, no stars; such deep darkness, that not one of the dear familiar objects in the garden was visible when I looked for them; such deep stillness, that even my own movements about the room almost frightened me! I tried to lie down and sleep, but the sense of loneliness came again, and quite overpowered me. You will say I am old enough, at six-and-twenty, to have exerted more control over myself. I hardly know how it happened, but I stole into Magdalen's room, just as I used to steal into it, years and years ago, when we were children. She was not in bed; she was sitting with her writing materials before her, thinking. I said I wanted to be with her the last night; and she kissed me, and told me to lie down, and promised soon to follow me. My mind was a little quieted, and I fell asleep. It was daylight when I woke—and the first sight I saw was Magdalen, still sitting in the chair, and still thinking. She

had never been to bed; she had not slept all through the night.

"I shall sleep when we have left Combe-Raven," she said. "I shall be better when it is all over, and I have bid Frank good-by." She had in her hand our father's will, and the letter he wrote to you; and when she had done speaking, she gave them into my possession. I was the eldest (she said), and those last precious relics ought to be in my keeping. I tried to propose to her that we should divide them; but she shook her head. 'I have copied for myself,' was her answer, 'all that he says of us in the will, and all that he says in the letter.' She told me this, and took from her bosom a tiny white silk bag, which she had made in the night, and in which she had put the extracts, so as to keep them always about her. 'This tells me in his own words what his last wishes were for both of us,' she said; 'and this is all I want for the future.'

"These are trifles to dwell on; and I am almost surprised at myself for not feeling ashamed to trouble you with them. But, since I have known what your early connexion was with my father and mother, I have learnt to think of you (and, I suppose, to write to you) as an old friend. And, besides, I have it so much at heart to change your opinion of Magdalen, that I can't help telling you the smallest things about her which may, in my judgment, end in making you think of her as I do.

"When breakfast-time came (on Thursday morning) we were surprised to find a strange letter on the table. Perhaps I ought to mention it to you, in case of any future necessity for your interference. It was addressed to Miss Garth, on paper with the deepest mourning border round it; and the writer was the same man who followed us on our way home from a walk, one day last spring—Captain Wragge. His object appears to be, to assert once more his audacious claim to a family connexion with my poor mother, under cover of a letter of condolence, which it is an insolence in such a person to have written at all. He expresses as much sympathy—on his discovery of our affliction in the newspaper—as if he had been really intimate with us; and he begs to know, in a postscript (being evidently in total ignorance of all that has really happened), whether it is thought desirable that he should be present, among the other relatives, at the reading of the will! The address he gives, at which letters will reach him for the next fortnight, is, 'Post-office, Birmingham.' This is all I have to tell you on the subject. Both the letter and the writer seem to me to be equally unworthy of the slightest notice, on our part or on yours.

"After breakfast, Magdalen left us, and went by herself into the morning-room. The weather being still showery, we had arranged that Francis Clare should see her in that room, when he presented himself to take his leave. I was upstairs when he came; and I remained up-stairs for

more than half an hour afterwards, sadly anxious, as you may well believe, on Magdalen's account.

"At the end of the half-hour, or more, I came down stairs. As I reached the landing, I suddenly heard her voice, raised entreatingly, and calling on him by his name—then loud sobs—then a frightful laughing and screaming, both together, that rang through the house. I instantly ran into the room; and found Magdalen on the sofa in violent hysterics, and Frank standing staring at her, with a lowering angry face, biting his nails.

"I felt so indignant—without knowing plainly why, for I was ignorant of course of what had passed at the interview—that I took Mr. Francis Clare by the shoulders, and pushed him out of the room. I am careful to tell you how I acted towards him, and what led to it; because I understand that he is excessively offended with me, and that he is likely to mention elsewhere, what he calls, my unladylike violence towards him. If he should mention it to you, I am anxious to acknowledge, of my own accord, that I forgot myself—not, I hope you will think, without some provocation.

"I pushed him into the hall, leaving Magdalen, for the moment, to Miss Garth's care. Instead of going away, he sat down sulkily on one of the hall-chairs. 'May I ask the reason of this extraordinary violence?' he inquired, with an injured look. 'No,' I said. 'You will be good enough to imagine the reason for yourself, and to leave us immediately, if you please.' He sat doggedly in the chair, biting his nails, and considering. 'What have I done, to be treated in this unfeeling manner?' he asked, after a while. 'I can enter into no discussion with you,' I answered; 'I can only request you to leave us. If you persist in waiting to see my sister again, I will go to the cottage myself, and appeal to your father.' He got up in a great hurry at those words. 'I have been infamously used in this business,' he said. 'All the hardships and the sacrifices have fallen to my share. I'm the only one among you who has any heart: all the rest are as hard as stones—Magdalen included. In one breath she says she loves me, and in another, she tells me to go to China. What have I done to be treated with this heartless inconsistency? I'm consistent myself—I only want to stop at home—and (what's the consequence?) you're all against me!' In that manner, he grumbled his way down the steps, and so I saw the last of him. This was all that passed between us. If he gives you any other account of it, what he says will be false. He made no attempt to return. An hour afterwards, his father came alone to say good-by. He saw Miss Garth and me, but not Magdalen; and he told us he would take the necessary measures, with your assistance, for having his son properly looked after in London, and seen safely on board the vessel when the time came. It was a short visit, and a sad leave-taking. Even Mr. Clare was sorry, though he tried hard to hide it.

"We had barely two hours, after Mr. Clare

had left us, before it would be time to go. I went back to Magdalen, and found her quieter and better; though terribly pale and exhausted, and oppressed, as I fancied, by thoughts which she could not prevail on herself to communicate. She would tell me nothing then—she has told me nothing since—of what passed between herself and Francis Clare. When I spoke of him angrily (feeling as I did that he had distressed and tortured her, when she ought to have had all the encouragement and comfort from him that man could give), she refused to hear me: she made the kindest allowances, and the sweetest excuses for him; and laid all the blame of the dreadful state in which I had found her, entirely on herself. Was I wrong in telling you that she had a noble nature? And won't you alter your opinion when you read these lines?

"We had no friends to come and bid us good-by; and our few acquaintances were too far from us—perhaps too indifferent about us—to call. We employed the little leisure left, in going over the house together for the last time. We took leave of our old schoolroom, our bedrooms, the room where our mother died, the little study where our father used to settle his accounts and write his letters—feeling towards them, in our forlorn situation, as other girls might have felt at parting with old friends. From the house, in a gleam of fine weather, we went into the garden, and gathered our last nosegay; with the purpose of drying the flowers when they begin to wither, and keeping them in remembrance of the happy days that are gone. When we had said good-by to the garden, there was only half an hour left. We went together to the grave; we knelt down, side by side, in silence, and kissed the sacred ground. I thought my heart would have broken. August was the month of my mother's birthday; and, this time last year, my father and Magdalen and I were all three consulting in secret what present we could make to surprise her with on the birthday morning.

"If you had seen how Magdalen suffered, you would never doubt her again. I had to take her from the last resting-place of our father and mother, almost by force. Before we were out of the churchyard, she broke from me, and ran back. She dropped on her knees at the grave; tore up from it passionately a handful of grass; and said something to herself, at the same moment, which, though I followed her instantly, I did not get near enough to hear. She turned on me in such a frenzied manner, when I tried to raise her from the ground—she looked at me with such a fearful wildness in her eyes—that I felt absolutely terrified at the sight of her. To my relief, the paroxysm left her as suddenly as it had come. She thrust away the tuft of grass into the bosom of her dress, and took my arm, and hurried with me out of the churchyard. I asked her why she had gone back—I asked what those words were, which she had spoken at the grave. 'A promise to our dead father,' she answered, with a momentary return of the wild look and the

frenzied manner which had startled me already. I was afraid to agitate her by saying more; I left all other questions to be asked at a fitter and a quieter time. You will understand from this, how terribly she suffers, how wildly and strangely she acts under violent agitation; and you will not interpret against her what she said or did, when you saw her on Wednesday last.

"We only returned to the house, in time to hasten away from it to the train. Perhaps, it was better for us—better that we had only a moment left to look back, before the turn in the road hid the last of Combe-Raven from our view. There was not a soul we knew at the station; nobody to stare at us, nobody to wish us good-by. The rain came on again, as we took our seats in the train. What we felt at the sight of the railway; what horrible remembrances it forced on our minds of the calamity which has made us fatherless—I cannot, and dare not, tell you. I have tried anxiously not to write this letter in a gloomy tone; not to return all your kindness to us by distressing you with our grief. Perhaps I have dwelt too long already on the little story of our parting from home? I can only say in excuse, that my heart is full of it; and what is not in my heart my pen won't write.

"We have been so short a time in our new abode, that I have nothing more to tell you—except that Miss Garth's sister has received us with the heartiest kindness. She considerably leaves us to ourselves, until we are fitter than we are now to think of our future plans, and to arrange as we best can for earning our own living. The house is so large, and the position of our rooms has been so thoughtfully chosen, that I should hardly know—except when I hear the laughing of the younger girls in the garden—that we were living in a school.

"With kindest and best wishes from Miss Garth and my sister,

"Believe me, dear Mr. Pendril,

"Gratefully yours,

"NORAH VANSTONE."

II.

FROM MISS GARTH TO MR. PENDRIL.

"Westmorland House, Kensington,
"September 23rd, 1846.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I write these lines in such misery of mind as no words can describe. Magdalen has deserted us. At an early hour this morning, she secretly left the house; and she has not been heard of since.

"I would come and speak to you personally; but I dare not leave Norah. I must try to control myself; I must try to write.

"Nothing happened yesterday to prepare me, or to prepare Norah, for this last—I had almost said, this worst—of all our afflictions. The only alteration we either of us noticed in the unhappy girl, was an alteration for the better when we parted for the night. She kissed me, which she has not done latterly; and she burst out

crying, when she embraced her sister next. We had so little suspicion of the truth, that we thought these signs of renewed tenderness and affection, a promise of better things for the future.

"This morning, at a little after eight o'clock, when her sister went into her room, it was empty; and a note in her handwriting, addressed to Norah, was lying on the dressing-table. I cannot prevail on Norah to part with the note; I can only send you the enclosed copy of it. You will see that it affords no clue to the direction she has taken.

"Knowing the value of time, in this dreadful emergency, I examined her room, and (with my sister's help) questioned the servants, immediately on the news of her absence reaching me. Her wardrobe was empty; and all her boxes but one, which she has evidently taken away with her, are empty too. We are of opinion that she has privately turned her dresses and jewellery into money; that she had the one trunk she took with her, removed from the house yesterday; and that she left us, this morning, on foot. The answers given by one of the servants are so unsatisfactory, that we believe the woman has been bribed to assist her; and has managed all those arrangements for her flight, which she could not have safely undertaken by herself.

"Of the immediate object with which she has left us, I entertain no doubt.

"I have reasons (which I can tell you at a fitter time) for feeling assured that she has gone away, with the intention of trying her fortune on the stage. She has in her possession the card of an actor by profession, who superintended an amateur theatrical performance at Clifton, in which she took part; and to him she has gone to help her. I saw the card at the time; and I know the actor's name to be Huxtable. The address, I cannot call to mind quite so correctly; but I am almost sure it was at some theatrical place, in Bow-street, Covent-garden. Let me entreat you not to lose a moment in sending to make the necessary inquiries; the first trace of her will, I firmly believe, be found at that address.

"If we had nothing worse to dread than her attempting to go on the stage, I should not feel the distress and dismay which now overpower me. Hundreds of other girls have acted as recklessly as she has acted, and have not ended ill after all. But my fears for Magdalen do not begin and end with the risk she is running at present.

"There has been something weighing on her mind ever since we left Combe-Raven—weighing far more heavily for the last six weeks than at first. Until the period when Francis Clare left England, I am persuaded she was secretly sustained by the hope that he would contrive to see her again. From the day when she knew that the measures you had taken for preventing this had succeeded; from the day when she was assured that the ship had really taken him away, nothing has roused, nothing

has interested her. She has given herself up, more and more hopelessly, to her own brooding thoughts; thoughts which I believe first entered her mind, on the day when the utter ruin of the prospects on which her marriage depended was made known to her. She has formed some desperate project of contesting the possession of her father's fortune with Michael Vanstone; and the stage career which she has gone away to try, is nothing more than a means of freeing herself from all home-dependence, and of enabling her to run what mad risks she pleases, in perfect security from all home-control. What it costs me to write of her in these terms, I must leave you to imagine. The time has gone by when any consideration of distress to my own feelings can weigh with me. Whatever I can say which will open your eyes to the real danger, and strengthen your conviction of the instant necessity of averting it, I say in despite of myself, without hesitation and without reserve.

"One word more, and I have done.

"The last time you were so good as to come to this house, do you remember how Magdalen embarrassed and distressed us, by questioning you about her right to bear her father's name? Do you remember her persisting in her inquiries, until she had forced you to acknowledge that, legally speaking, she and her sister had No Name? I venture to remind you of this, because you have the affairs of hundreds of clients to think of, and you might well have forgotten the circumstance. Whatever natural reluctance she might otherwise have had to deceiving us, and degrading herself, by the use of an assumed name, that conversation with you is certain to have removed. We must discover her, by personal description—we can trace her in no other way.

"I can think of nothing more to guide your decision in our deplorable emergency. For God's sake, let no expense and no efforts be spared. I send my letter by private messenger: it ought to reach you by ten o'clock this morning, at the latest. Let me have one line in answer, to say you will act instantly for the best. My only hope of quieting Norah is to show her a word of encouragement from your pen.

"Believe me, dear sir,

"Yours sincerely and obliged,

"HARRIET GARTH."

III.

FROM MAGDALEN TO NORAH (ENCLOSED IN THE PRECEDING LETTER).

"MY DARLING,—Try to forgive me. I have struggled against myself, till I am worn out in the effort. I am the wretchedest of living creatures. Our quiet life here, maddens me; I can bear it no longer; I must go. If you knew what my thoughts are; if you knew how hard I have fought against them, and how horribly they have gone on haunting me in the lonely quiet of this house, you would pity and forgive me. Oh, my love, don't feel hurt at my not opening my heart to you as I ought! I dare not

open it. I dare not show myself to you as I really am.

"Pray don't send and seek after me; I will write and relieve all your anxieties. You know, Norah, we must get our living for ourselves; I have only gone to get mine in the way which is fittest for me. Whether I succeed, or whether I fail, I can do myself no harm, either way. I have no position to lose, and no name to degrade. Don't doubt I love you—don't let Miss Garth doubt my gratitude. I go away miserable at leaving you; but I must go. If I had loved you less dearly, I might have had the courage to say this in your presence—but how could I trust myself to resist your persuasions, and to bear the sight of your distress? Farewell, my darling. Take a thousand kisses from me, my own best dearest love, till we meet again.

"MAGDALEN."

IV.

FROM SERGEANT BULMER (OF THE DETECTIVE POLICE) TO MR. PENDRILL.

"Scotland Yard,

"September 29th, 1846.

"SIR,—Your clerk informs me that the parties interested in our inquiry after the missing young lady, are anxious for news of the same. I went to your office to speak to you about the matter to-day. Not having found you, and not being able to return and try again to-morrow, I write these lines to save delay, and to tell you how we stand thus far.

"I am sorry to say, no advance has been made since my former report. The trace of the young lady which we found nearly a week since, still remains the last trace discovered of her. This case seems a mighty simple one, looked at from a distance. Looked at close, it alters very considerably for the worse, and becomes, to speak the plain truth—a Poser.

"This is how we now stand:

"We have traced the young lady to the theatrical agent's in Bow-street. We know that at an early hour on the morning of the twenty-third, the agent was called down stairs, while he was dressing, to speak to a young lady in a cab at the door. We know that, on her production of Mr. Huxtable's card, he wrote on it Mr. Huxtable's address, and heard her order the cabman to drive to the terminus. We believe she left by the nine o'clock train. We followed her by the twelve o'clock train. We have ascertained that she called, at half-past two, at Mr. Huxtable's lodgings; that she found he was away, and not expected back till eight in the evening; that she left word she would call again at eight; and that she never returned. Mr. Huxtable's statement is—he and the young lady have never set eyes on each other. The first consideration which follows, is this:—Are we to believe Mr. Huxtable? I have carefully inquired into his character; I know as much, or more, about him than he knows about himself; and my opinion is, that we are to believe him. To the best of my knowledge, he is a perfectly honest man.

"Here, then, is the hitch in the case. The young lady sets out with a certain object before her. Instead of going on to the accomplishment to that object, she stops short of it. Why has she stopped? and where? Those are, unfortunately, just the questions which we can't answer yet.

"My own opinion of the matter is briefly as follows:—I don't think she has met with any serious accident. Serious accidents, in nine cases out of ten, discover themselves. My own notion is, that she has fallen into the hands of some person, or persons, interested in hiding her away, and sharp enough to know how to set about it. Whether she is in their charge, with or without her own consent, is more than I can undertake to say at present. I don't wish to raise false hopes or false fears; I wish to stop short at the opinion I have given already.

"In regard to the future, I may tell you that I have left one of my men in daily communication with the authorities. I have also taken care to have the handbills offering a reward for the discovery of her, more widely circulated. Lastly, I have completed the necessary arrangements for seeing the playbills of all country theatres, and for having the dramatic companies well looked after. Some years since this would have cost a serious expenditure of time and money. Luckily for our purpose, the country theatres are in a bad way. Excepting the large cities, hardly one of them is open; and we can keep our eye on them, with little expense, and less difficulty.

"These are the steps which I think it needful to take at present. If you are of another opinion, you have only to give me your directions, and I will carefully attend to the same. I don't by any means despair of our finding the young lady, and bringing her back to her friends safe and well. Please to tell them so; and allow me to subscribe myself,

"Yours respectfully,
"ABRAHAM BULMER."

V.

ANONYMOUS LETTER ADDRESSED TO MR.
PENDRIL.

"SIR,—A word to the wise. The friends of a certain young lady are wasting time and money, to no purpose. Your confidential clerk and your detective policeman are looking for a needle in a bottle of hay. This is the ninth of October, and they have not found her yet: they will as soon find the North-West Passage. Call your dogs off; and you may hear of the young lady's safety, under her own hand. The longer you look for her, the longer she will remain, what she is now—lost."

[The preceding letter is thus endorsed, in Mr. Pendril's handwriting:—"No apparent means of tracing the enclosed to its source. Post-mark, 'Charing-cross.' Stationer's stamp cut off the inside of the envelope. Handwriting, probably a man's, in disguise. Writer, who-

ever he is, correctly informed. No further trace of the younger Miss Vanstone discovered yet."]

THE POLITE WORLD'S NUNNERY.

In some parts of North Germany the suppression of monasteries has diverted their funds not into the hands of the State, nor into great hospitals, nor into school endowments, but to the use of modified nunneries, Protestant of course, and devoted to the particular solace of persons of condition: a sort of fashionable almshouses for unmarried ladies of high rank. Such ladies have comfortable apartments in the cloister, a handsome income out of its revenue, and a position in society as easy as that of a married woman. They are called canonesses. Each secularised nunnery, founded by noble families whose descendants have especial right of entrance, maintains a certain number of ladies, who are elected from a list of candidates whenever, by marriage or death, vacancies occur. In addition to the family claim and the entrance by vote, the abbess, who attains her own power, which is absolute, by free election of the sisterhood, has a fixed number of independent nominations, and so has the sovereign of the country. Whether poor or rich, nobody may become a canoness who is not of noble blood. In some cloisters, nobility for sixteen generations old, is an indispensable condition of sisterhood.

On the wide moors and dreary plains of North Germany the approach to a cloister is marked by a change of scenery, at the least from poverty of soil, to a show of wealth and luxury. One of these institutions, in which the writer lived for many years, was on a vast bleak heath over which, before the time of railways, men travelled for days seeing nothing but heath, herbage, and dwarf firs, with here and there some fields of buckwheat, oats, or rye, around villages of a dozen low thatched cottages. The villagers, who are rich, become so chiefly by the keeping of bees and sheep.

Our cloister was Heilthal, the oasis in such a desert. It had been built near to a rivulet. There were rich pastures, wooded hills, splendid chesnut avenues, and a large forest chiefly of beech and oak, besides two smaller woods of fir, birch, and lime trees. Amidst all this, lay the cloister, an old majestic building with a dozen pretty residences clustering about it in gardens, some on the rivulet side, half hidden behind trees. There was a village of old Heilthal within an hour's walk, and legend said that the cloister had been originally built there, many hundred years ago. The original nunnery, however, was burnt down, and when it was being rebuilt with increased magnificence, the arch enemy fought in vain against the holy labour. The day of the consecration was at hand, after which he would lose all power against the work. He resolved, therefore, to destroy the abbey, by pouring down upon it large pieces of rock during the night

before the consecration. Laden with a great sackful of rocks, he set out on his errand, but in his eagerness he had overloaded his strength, for he did not fly over the moor with his usual swiftness. He dropped, therefore, a piece of rock here and there to lighten the weight—those pieces are still pointed out—but it was of no use. So he flapped on and on, until a sudden terror seized him at the smell of morning. The dark mass of nunnery was dimly visible in the grey mist. It was but a few minutes' flight, when the cock crew. The reign of night was over, and, with a heavy fall, the thousands and thousands of devil's stones came harmlessly down upon the barren moor, where to this day they lie, only half an hour's walk from the cloister.

If the present convent be really the same that gave shelter to the pious nuns of old, it must have been very much altered since their time. The poor little cells have developed into light and airy rooms; and, where they have kept their original dimensions they are transformed into charming boudoirs or cozy studios, as the taste of their present owners may direct.

The building has some old walls overgrown with ivy, and is either windowless, or closely set with windows in the most fantastical manner. Some of these windows are narrow, others small prison squares, and some are round.

This ancient part of the building is the most picturesque, but except two small side wings, which have some beautifully carved bay-windows, and are partly fitted up for the personal use of the ladies, the old cloister is either uninhabited, or used only for domestic offices. The front is nearly all new, forming two long wings on either side of a church, and containing twenty-five suite of apartments, occupied by as many canonesses. Each suite consists of five rooms: one large drawing-room, a somewhat smaller dining-room, a bedroom, and a boudoir or cabinet, with a room either for use of the lady's maid or as a sort of store-room. Each lady has her own stores for her separate household, but there is one large kitchen for common use. There are, also, two large saloons for grand occasions, and half a dozen spare rooms for visitors; these, like the kitchen, the saloons, the domestic offices and servants' halls, are common property.

In one wing, resides the lady abbess; in the other, the prioress. The abbess has a part of the building wholly to herself, her separate kitchen, her own cook, gardener, &c., and everything on a scale far above that of the canonesses. The prioress has also some decided privileges, and a larger income; but she is subordinate to the abbess, who has the chief care of administration, and is aided by men of business, including a well-paid lawyer steward. From the property of the cloister, everybody in the community receives a certain income paid in ready money: the amount is not generally known, but cannot be inconsiderable, as it not only enables the canonesses who are without any

private property to live in ease and comfort, but even to support poor relatives. A canoness often takes her mother, sister, or some other female relative to live with her; but this requires special consent of the abbess, which is not always obtained. Great care is required in adding new elements to a society of women.

The abbess of Heilthal, when the writer lived there, was not over-particular in this respect. Gentle, kind-hearted, and obliging, she liked to grant favours, and had so deep a sense of justice, that she rarely claimed anything for herself which she would not have granted to another. She had living with her, a widowed sister with half a dozen titles, enormous German pride, much firmness, and an immoderate love of the exercise of power. Whether the most highly gracious Frau von Bombadenheim was a blessing to her sister the abbess, might be questioned. The sisters, at any rate, seemed truly fond of one another; each spoke as "we," and they were constantly mentioned in the plural as "abbesses—" at times, of course, with a mocking emphasis on the last syllable. Everybody loved and respected the gentle and well-meaning abbess in the singular, but everybody hated her double, from whom there was no escape. It was curious to see the two sisters together, when advice or favour of the lady abbess was required. She never gave either, without a glance into the face, where she seemed to read more quickly than in her own mind a "Yes or No," or the evasive "We will think of it, my love."

This "We will think of it, my love," was the answer that Fräulein Elise von Dachstrutter and her aunt received when they had asked whether the lady abbesses might have any objection to their giving tea and a dance?

Elise von Dachstrutter was one of the new comers, had just taken the veil, as it was called, and was spending her first quarter in Heilthal. She was not more than nineteen, was graceful and accomplished and fascinating in no common degree, and had got up a perfect revolution, not only within the walls of the cloister, but in its vicinity. Everybody admired her, men and women, old and young, high and low.

"She will let us know," said Elise to her aunt. "That means Yes, of course; but why not say so at once?"

"Wait and see, darling. I am rather afraid the abbesses will not like the idea; it is so decided an innovation, that I scarcely think the Bombadenheim will give her consent."

"Oh! She looked quite pleased; nay, she looked at me, even with an expression of sympathy and tenderness, when I, trembling a bit, made my request. She kept my hand all the time in hers, and pressed and patted it softly."

"Worse and worse," said the elder lady. "I have often seen mischief come after that. You do not know yet, child, what a life ours is. She seldom patronises anything which others suggest. She meddles with everything, and spies into everybody's private affairs. She knows the

exact number of the dishes one has for dinner, to declare them to be more numerous than they ought to be. She knows, sooner than you do yourself, that your maid is a flirt, and had better be dismissed. She strongly suspects that new cloak of yours to be lined with scarlet (a prohibited colour), and she is sure to find you out. Why, niece, the other day she had even the impudence to send her maid to inquire whether I was aware that the carriage had been at my door for ten minutes or more, and that the horses would catch cold, if I kept them so long."

"How can you be angry at that, aunt? Surely it is not everybody who cares for other people's horses. She must be a good woman after all."

The lady abbesses returned the visit the same morning, and introduced some confidential friendly discussion, in which she explained her general and warm sympathy with the innocent pleasures and enjoyments of youth, but, at the same time, mentioned her duties in regard to the position of the cloister and the necessity of extreme caution not to expose members to calumnies and false reports—there might be some little occasional dance among themselves, she would not mind that, but invitations and preparations, no, it could not possibly be! So Elise's quadrilles were never danced.

These cloisters are strictly Lutheran Protestant, as all North Germany is, and their church service is like that of all the other churches. Nevertheless, they have retained many customs and ceremonies of the nuns, which are strangely mixed up with their present lay constitution. The canonesses attend service on Sundays with the rest of the congregation, but the communion is held for them separately, and on a few particular occasions they have a private service in their choir (adjoining the church), attended by their servants only. Then, above all, most of the cloisters possess figures of Patron Saints to this day. They are kept in secret shrines and said to be costly figures of gold and silver, which are not shown to the inquisitive stranger, nor much talked about by the canonesses and their friends. Report says that these precious patrons have their principal part to perform at the installation of the ladies, but nobody knows how and where. The day of installation is celebrated with great pomp, and closed with a grand evening party, but the act itself is a bit of freemasonry held perfectly secret among the ladies, not even their pastor or most intimate friend being admitted.

The new comer gets first her "half veil," as it is called (novitiate), and after some time—the length of which depends on circumstances—the whole veil; which whole veil imposes on her all the duties, advantages, and privileges of her state, but leaves her free to give it up whenever she desires.

The ladies have their special costume, which they wear in church on solemn occasions, and at large dinners or evening parties. Their everyday dress is of the common fashion, with the exception of a few colours, which are forbidden. The costumes of the Canonesses vary somewhat

in the different cloisters, but they are more or less similar to each other. In Heilthal it consists of a black satin gown, lace frill, sky blue and silver ribbon across the shoulder, with a small enamelled star on the left breast, and, finally, the veil. This is a very peculiar sort of head-dress, composed of white lace, more like a narrow turban or fez than a veil, and highly becoming. Under this mass of white lace young faces look particularly fresh and lovely, old faces more stately and dignified, than under any other head-dress. At dinner or evening parties the ladies of the cloister always form the centre of attraction, and their uniform shows to great advantage in comparison with costumes of the present fashion.

The establishment keeps a considerable staff of servants. A night-watchman or two to guard the premises all night, three gardeners, and four cooks, with one housemaid for every two ladies. Only the female servants live in the cloister, where they form a little host by themselves. The ladies of Heilthal showed much taste and a generous disposition in surrounding themselves with the very prettiest girls in the neighbourhood. A pity only that this transplantation into the luxuriant soil of the cloister did not always secure the prosperity of the little wild flowers! These girls, spoiled by an easy independent life, became unfit for other service, as well as for their future humble lot as poor artisans' and farmers' wives.

There is domestic authority exercised by a Lady of the Kitchen, to whom the servants have to apply in any serious difficulty, and who has to keep watch over their proceedings. Not a very enviable office, one would think, and full of responsibility; but Fräulein von Langsam, our Lady of the Kitchen, filled it with great equanimity and without troubling herself much. She was then more than seventy, scarcely looked fifty, and was reported to have been the finest woman of her time. She used to have a particularly clever and experienced maid, with whom she was closeted for about three hours every morning, at the end of which seclusion she came forth the dazzling star of the day. Her mental capacities were rather low, and it seemed impossible for her to deliver a sentence of more than half a dozen words without the strangest mistakes. How this poor soul came to be Lady of the Kitchen never appeared, but whenever the servants, riotous in mirth or quarrel, had to be spoken to, Fräulein von Langsam went down and delivered her speech to the general stupefaction.

Each of the other ladies had some trifling domestic duty to perform. One of them had to keep the keys of the cloister, and occasionally to see that the hall doors were locked at the appointed time. Another lady had to be present at the corn deliveries; a third to assist the abbess in her business correspondence. Some of the offices were very peculiar. For example, there was a Lady of the Gloves, whose duty it was to knit, against every Christmas time, three pairs of gloves for the clergymen, and an odd glove

for the schoolmaster of Heilthal. These gloves were of a very ancient pattern, made of black wool, wadded, lined with purple silk, and of enormous size—an advantage for the poor schoolmaster, who perhaps managed to put his two hands into the odd glove without waiting a whole year for its fellow.

The great paneled kitchen of Heilthal, in the old part of the building, would perhaps have looked a little cold and gloomy but for a most glorious wood fire which burnt all day and lighted up the ancient hall so as to produce a wonderful effect. The oak carvings assumed a golden tinge, and all the faces around glowed with a beautiful blush as from the setting sun. Seldom even in the palaces and halls of princes is there seen anything as grand and picturesque as that cloister kitchen with its glorious fire. The use of such a fire, before which an ox might have been roasted off-hand at any hour of the day, is another question. The waste of fuel was said to be enormous; the poor cooks, who had to stand near it, were half roasted along with their dozens of joints, and could never keep their places long. The food was often spoilt, the pots and vessels were burst by the intense heat, and there were many applications for a change to some more modern and reasonable cooking apparatus. But the abbess always declined.

Early in the morning, after each lady had given her orders for dinner, her maid sallied forth to carry the required provisions to the kitchen, to deposit them there, and to transmit the directions to the head cook, who must needs be a woman of great powers and wonderful memory. This done, all ladies' maids and superfluous persons were turned out at the kitchen-door till dinner-time, when the old hall swarmed again: every spinster—the title of the ladies' maids—carrying a large flat basket lined with a snowy cloth, in which she had to take her lady's dinner home.

The social intercourse between the cloister and the families of the gentry in and around Heilthal, was very lively. There were friendly meetings every day, musical and reading evenings especially patronised by the younger members of society; select circle of friends of equal tastes, interests, or accomplishments, met for a certain object; and large parties, where everybody met everybody, and where the object was not quadrilles but card-playing.

The company on such an evening assembled at seven or soon after, and the first hour was spent in conversation, generally very animated. The ladies, sitting in a large circle in the drawing-room or in small knots in the adjoining rooms; the gentlemen standing hat in hand either before them or behind their chairs; the servants going round with tea and cakes. The tea was poured out in cups of all shapes and colours; sugar-basin, cream-jug, and two small decanters, one with rum, the other with red wine, were placed in the middle of the tray—the rum and wine for those gentlemen all of the olden times who considered tea an old woman's beverage that needed enlivening. Coffee is never served in

these German evening parties; it is only taken for the early breakfast, and again shortly after dinner.

If the hostess were not very experienced, she would, however smoothly and pleasantly everything went on, feel nervous and uneasy, for all depended on her tact in arranging the card-tables. The moment would draw nearer and nearer; now the hostess would glance at her watch—half-past eight—and she would feel still uncertain about the third and fourth table. Of course, she had been considering the ceremonies for days, but how could she know that Major A. B. would be unable to come, and that Fräulein v. C. D. would come, with her troublesome headache. She must be sure that Frau v. E. F. would be mortally offended if placed at the third table, as she always aimed at the second, if not at the first—but how could it be helped, when Count G. H. I. J. K. belonged, of course, to the abbess-table, and she found it impossible to shut out the prioress and the dear Herr Pastor from the second.

There was a liberal party, a conservative party, a sentimental party, and a strong-minded party. The head of the latter was a very peculiar woman. Masculine in appearance, and without any apparent attractions, she exercised a great influence over most of her friends, whom she governed by her intellect and charmed by her wit. She was always in opposition to the abbesses, and that openly and defiantly—ready to fight her battle out with them to the last. Independent in mind, she tried hard to be so in every respect, and succeeded better than any one else. She had her own little intellectual circle, and formed it without the least reference to rank and station; though rumour said—and rumour had something to say about everything and everybody—that she rather preferred the talk of the opposite sex!

The soul of the sentimental party was a canoness, extremely thin and fair, mild and sympathising to a painful degree. She wore a white or light grey dress, and spoke in a faint voice. If any passion found place in her breast it was a passion for music; though a perfect pianoforte player herself, and a competent judge, she would swallow every kind of music, and so got the epithet of our musical glutton. The organ-grinders were much favoured by her. They were sure to play under her windows the most heartrending tunes, and one coin after the other would rain down upon them; a small white hand would sign to them to repeat again and again, until her next-door neighbour, in despair, would rush in and cry, "For Heaven's sake stop that man, I cannot bear him any longer."

So the spirit of faction, jealousy, and intrigue prevailed among us. But our prioress, who never belonged to any of the opposing elements, was esteemed and loved by all parties. She was the good spirit of the cloister, in form of a matron of nearly seventy, with plain features, a very short stout figure, no waist whatever, and a set of false brown curls. These

were, I dare say, put on by her maid every morning, quite as they should be; but, gradually, they got wrong as the day advanced, standing up here, hanging down there, revealing small streaks of silver-white hair, so soft and silken, that the writer was always struggling to imagine those brown delusions altogether away, and to picture the sweet matron's face in its own natural adornment. The young people doted on the lady prioress; for, though she had a heart for all mankind, and was the friend and comforter of those who needed comfort and help, her especial sympathies with youth and happiness were obvious. She had a child's mind and simplicity, a child's facility of enjoyment, and a touch of harmless humour which was irresistible. Why were there not more of her stamp? It seems strange that a place like Heilthal, which provided its inhabitants so liberally with all the comforts of life, and with so many ways to happiness, should yet sour their tempers, nurse their faults, and take away their peace of mind. The root of the evil was, undoubtedly, that the canons had nothing worth mentioning to do.

WRECKED ON ISLAND NUMBER TEN.

"I CAN'T stand this any longer, Ned; I shall turn out, and go on deck. This stifling heat is bad enough to bear, without the stings of the confounded mosquitoes. I could as soon sleep in a kiln with a blister all over me."

I scrambled out of my berth, and huddled on my clothes as well as the dim light would allow. The other occupant of the little cabin, my dear old friend and kinsman, Ned Granger, merely yawned and stretched himself. Petty annoyances did not trouble him. He had been sleeping as contentedly as if the villainous little den of a cabin close to the engine, which we had been talked into hiring on board the Van Buren, were a cool and airy bed-chamber. We had both been outwitted by the steam-boat clerk, a "smart citizen," who had assured us on his honour that the only disposable cabin left on board the Mississippi packet was a snug and pleasant one, free from bugs and cockroaches, and not in the least too hot. And now I was stewed and stung to the verge of fever, while Ned, whom nothing seemed to hurt, turned over on his pillow with a little sigh, murmuring, "Take it coolly, old chap. You'll forget the temperature and the gnats when we get to Cairo and have our breakfast ashore. Take it coolly."

I replied rather testily that I wished I could, but that, not being a salamander, I couldn't. And with this withering retort I left the cabin, and stumbled my way on deck. The hurricane-deck of an American river steamer is a gay scene by day, but it had a melancholy and lonely look as I saw it in the feeble moonlight, bare and deserted. The pilot in his lofty wheelhouse, intent upon the helm and the bearings, and a solitary deck hand who filled the office of lookout, appeared to be the only human beings awake save myself. To be sure, from the hatch-

way of the engine-room there gushed at times a transient glare of dull crimson firelight, and a pitch-black figure crossed the gleam, while a sound as of the dull roaring of a caged wild beast, told that the furnace had been supplied with fresh wood. It was very hot and sultry, even in the air; but the atmosphere was endurable when compared with the oven-like oppression of the heat below. The mosquitoes were still troublesome, but I felt that I could bear their sharp stings better than when I lay in the close cabin.

I leaned over the side rail and gazed upon the yellow river, whose turbid waters stretched for an immense distance on either hand; the moon was new and pale, but I could make out the bold bluffs of the Tennessee shore, though the low-lying forest of the Missouri bank was hid in dark shadow.

"'Tis lonesome here, mister, ain't it?" drawled out a nasal voice at my elbow. I could not help starting.

"I didn't mean to skear you, Mr. Barham," apologised the voice, which I now recognised as that of an American passenger, General Jeremiah Flint, who had taken a fancy to Ned Granger and myself, and with whom we had struck up a travelling friendship. General Flint was a thorough-bred Yankee, one of those tall lathy dark-browed down-easters who are found in active employment all over the Union. His complete history, of which he now and then favoured us with piquant scraps, would have been very amusing even in print, and partook a good deal of the adventurous ups and downs in the career of Hajji Baba. Just now the general was at rather a low pitch of the social see-saw, being on board the boat in no more exalted capacity than that of travelling salesman to a "jobber" of dry goods at Philadelphia. General Flint was not and never had been a military man. He had been postmaster-general of some small State, Vermont or Maine, and had retained the latter and more portable half of his quondam official designation.

"It's kinder dull up here, but I couldn't sleep," said the new comer; "I've got it happened home upon my mind to night that mischief's on the brew."

"On the what?" said I, laughing.

"On the brew, sir," answered the general, very solemnly. "Young men like you, Mr. Barham, air too apt to ridicule the presentiments of their elders, but Jeremy Flint's no greenhorn, and he don't relish the feel of matters."

I had observed before, that the general was a little oracular, and, what may seem odder in a Yankee, slightly superstitious; but I knew he was a keen practical person who had seen ten times as much of the world as I, an Oxonian of four-and-twenty, could possibly have done. Therefore, when my queer acquaintance seemed ill at ease, I strongly suspected that his prognostications of coming evil were based on other grounds than those of sentiment.

"I'll let you know, mister, the long and short

of it," said the Yankee, dropping his voice; "this Van Buren we're afloat in, is an old craft, old and leaky, and clean wore out from her keelson to her b'iler, that's jest truth. The owners held a talk about giving her up, they did, a month ago, but old Barnabas Kyle, senior partner, said, Hold on—she's good for a voyage or two, and if she breaks up, the fixings are no loss—let her rip!"

"Do you mean to say that the owners have permitted this boat to sail, knowing she was unsafe? If so, and harm happens, it is murder!"

The general nodded. "That's a European idea, sir. I don't say I approve of what old Kyle's done, but it's common enough. Still, this child wishes he were in his boots, and his boots ashore, *he* does."

And the American drummed the devil's tattoo on the side rail with his long bony fingers.

I asked whereabouts we were? I knew that Flint was familiar with every bend of the river.

"We're past New Madrid," he answered, scanning the shore line sharply; "and we're going mortal slow for all our puffing and straining. Let me see—that's Red Bluff on the Tennessee bank, and yon dark line on the larboard must be Island Number Ten."

As if the words had been the sounds of some fearful spell, there was, at that instant, a roar as loud as the roar of a hundred cannon, a crash of breaking timber and riven iron-work, and the deck was torn into splintered fragments, while fire, shattered beams, and scalding vapour, came spouting up as from a volcano. I was struggling with the cold waters of the Mississippi, which bubbled and hissed in my ears, as the strong current sucked me down stream. What had happened I hardly knew. I was stunned and deafened, but I fought for life with mechanical energy, and, being able to swim, could just keep myself above the surface. My wet clothes and boots embarrassed me, and the stream was too strong to be resisted; but, just as I felt myself being swept away like a leaf upon the river, I jostled against a floating mass of wood-work, and clutched it.

"Give me your fingers, whoever you air," cried a familiar voice, and a strong hand caught my wrist. "Mr. Barham, by all that's airtily! Wall, I'm glad to see you alive, Britisher. Get hold of the beam, and scramble up where I am."

General Flint assisted me to crawl to the top of the floating timber, where he sat at ease, with his feet dangling in the water.

"Tain't first time this child has seen a b'iler bust. Apple quiltings! I thought it would be a final smash! The notions I was taking back to Philadelphia were all well insured, that's one comfort, and my notes are in my waistband."

"Boiler burst! Then the boiler *did* burst, and we are alone! The rest of us? Ned Granger?"

"There's not much moon, but you may make out the hull of the steamer afloat yet," said the Yankee; "what's left of her, a drifting like a floating coffin. If there's any living human being aboard her—drowning will be welcome,

after the misery they're in, I guess. The water and steam did scald, I reckon!"

A dull pain in my hands attracted my notice. I looked down and could see that they were swollen and red. I remember that I had grasped the side rail at the moment of the explosion, and I had no doubt that I had been partially injured by the dash of heated water, from which Flint seemed wholly to have escaped.

I do not recollect what followed. I heard Flint's voice very indistinctly—a mere humming of meaningless words—and I rocked to and fro, from weakness. My brain reeled. Then I grew sick and faint, and I remember being in deadly fear lest I should tumble off the spar. I remember, too, trying to call to my companion for help, but failing to speak intelligibly. And then I remember no more until I was lying on a heap of brushwood ashore, and Flint was insinuating between my lips some drops of whisky from a metal flask.

"Cheer up, Britisher; you'll do now. It kinder came over you," said the good-natured Yankee, lifting the flask to his own lips, and imbibing several sups of the cordial.

I gave his hand a feeble squeeze.

"I owe you my life; but where are we? And Ned—are any saved?"

The Yankee shook his head. "We're on Island Number Ten, that's where *we* air. Jest after you gave in, we grounded, and I got a grip of a snag sticking out of the mud, and we're on dry airth again. If you're strong enough, mister, we'd best look for a shelter, for 'tain't wholesome to lie out, so far south."

I was bruised and weak, and my hands were very painful, but I could walk pretty well. We made our way across a sort of swampy meadow, the general talking rapidly and continually, in his kindly wish to divert my thoughts from the sad fate of my gallant cousin. I gathered from him that the island had no permanent inhabitants, but was occasionally frequented by ferry-men, flatmen, and others, at the particular seasons when their trades were in full activity. General Flint scarcely fancied that we should find any living possessors of this dreary spot; but he made no doubt we should discover some log-house in tolerable repair, where we could pass the night.

"And in the mornin', mister, we'll signal a steam-boat and get picked off. No fear of our playin' Robinson Crusoe too long here, I guess. We'll have a banyan breakfast, but our appetite for dinner will be a caution to alligators. Ah! here's a con-venient location."

In effect, we were on the threshold of a large and substantial log-house, behind which we could dimly discern the outlines of other buildings. The heavy door was ajar, and yielded sullenly to our push. We entered. The interior was, of course, quite dark, but a feeble red glow proceeded from some dying embers on the hearth, proving that human beings had been there within a few hours. The general showed no surprise. He merely observed that a timber flat, bound for New Orleans, had probably

run aground on the island, and wished the men had remained, that they might have given us a cast ashore in their broadhorn. He stooped, blew the embers to a glow, laid on dry brush and fresh wood, and soon the hut was illuminated by a cheery glare. It was large, in good repair, and contained an old table of unbarked wood, and several broken barrels which had probably served for seats. There were shelves nailed up, but they were empty, nor were any provisions visible. But in an inner recess, half partitioned off from the larger apartment, were several heaps of brushwood and flowery grasses: beds not to be despised when mattresses and pillows were out of the question. I do not suppose that Jeremiah Flint had ever heard of the French proverb, *Qui dort dîne*, but he showed some sagacity in remarking that when asleep, our foodless and comfortless state would be less vexatious. We dried our clothes before the large fire, and prepared to obtain such repose as we might, in the inner compartment of the cabin. General Flint had been, in the course of his adventurous life, accustomed to queer sleeping-places, and it was with a grunt of satisfaction that he adjusted his bony frame to the heaps of withering brush.

"Pull some o' them sassafras boughs over your face, mister: that's the way to cheat the skeeters," said he; "we'll have a good long nap, and wake up in time to hoist a handkercher on one of those hemlocks down by the water-side. If a steamer don't see it, a flat-boat may."

I lay still a few moments, and then rolled restlessly from side to side. My nerves were strung to a painful tension, and my brain was too active to allow sleep to visit me. The accident, with all its horrors, rather imagined than actually seen, was ever before my eyes, but it seemed unreal and unnatural, a vivid nightmare rather than a sad reality. Poor Ned Granger, too! What sad news to carry home to the quiet Devonshire rectory, where father, mother, and sisters, were hopefully awaiting his return! To die so early, and by a death so horrible and abrupt—how should I ever dare to tell it? Poor dear Ned, who saved my life once, who had done me fifty kindnesses, with whom I had never exchanged an angry word. Where should I ever again in life find such a friend as that early one, now lost?

How long I mused I cannot tell, but I was startled by a sound which broke the stillness of the night—a very odd sound to be heard on Island Number Ten—the neigh of a horse. I shook off my reverie, and half raised myself to listen. The sound was not renewed, but so sure was I that it had been no cheat of fancy that I determined to rouse my companion and solve the doubt. It was not until I had shaken Flint, who was a heavy sleeper, that he woke up, grumbling.

"Jerusalem, mister, what's afloat? Not a b'ar swum across, sure-ly."

"No," said I, rather ashamed, "only the neighing of a horse, close at hand."

"Impossible—couldn't be! There's no horse

beasts here. What should they be doing on the island? You must have been dreaming, Mr. Barham."

The general yawned and sank back into the pile of brushwood, nor was it long before his heavy breathing announced that he was fast asleep. I was far from convinced, but I was puzzled; imagination, I knew, does often play us strange tricks. Besides, was it not possible that a horse had neighed on shore, on either the left or right bank, and that my ear, perhaps unusually acute after the excitement of the night, had caught and exaggerated the distant sound. I pondered yet awhile, but I was weary; gradually my nerves relaxed, my eyelids became heavy, and I sank into deep slumber. Not so deep, however, but that my dreams were stirring and various, changing like the shifting patterns of a kaleidoscope. One dream was particularly distinct. I have forgotten it now, but I know that a conversation between ideal personages attracted my fullest attention, and that by degrees this conversation grew more and more real and audible.

"I don't care a cuss how it kept alight," said some one; "just clap on a kippie more sticks, and I'll blow up the kindlers."

Directly afterwards I heard the familiar noise—familiar, at least, to one fresh from prairie travel—of somebody blowing the embers of a fire into a blaze, while the sharp crackle of burning wood succeeded.

"Where's Stone's marm?" asked some one else, in a high cracked voice, that contrasted with the deep tones of the first speaker: "where's the old critter got to, I admire! I'm as starved, for one, as any wolf, and there's never a scrap to eat until she briles the meat. Ten hours' work makes a man peckish, and we must clear out of this before day."

Vaguely the thought dawned in my half-unconscious mind that I was no longer asleep, and that the words I heard were real words, spoken by beings of flesh and blood. I opened my eyes. The larger compartment of the log-house was suffused with dull red light, which brightened into a clearer glow as the wood, heaped on the fire with a lavish hand, caught the ascending blaze. Around this fire were grouped five or six men, most of whom wore the red flannel shirts and coarse homespun of the regular Mississippi working garb, though one was in a suit of rusty black, of city make. Several more dark figures hovered about the open doorway, going and coming, bringing bags and barrels, which were received by two of the men within. Boatmen, thought I, who had probably put in for a safe haven when benighted on the rapid and dangerous river. I was preparing to accost them, when a shrill neighing, unmistakably that of a horse this time and close by, was answered as shrilly and distinctly by an equine companion.

"Darn them brutes! pinch their nostrils, you loading dunces! or, if a steamer goes by, the place will be blown upon," said a deep and fierce voice from the hut. And a man whom I had not observed, sprang up from a sitting posture

and strode across the illuminated space. I rubbed my eyes, and cautiously raised myself on my elbow.

The last speaker was of gigantic stature, with a fell of shaggy black hair tumbling on the collar of his red woollen shirt; his face was a stern and forbidding one, like that of some robber soldier in a Flemish picture; he wore a pistol and a bowie-knife, ostentatiously displayed, in the black leather belt around his waist.

"All right, captain! 'twas that rampaging black beast, Jem Hudson's colt, that got loose a minit," answered a man from without; and very soon several men and two or three women entered the log-house. Most of the new comers were ruffianly figures, with the brass-bound handles of knives or pistols peeping out of their pockets, or protruding from the breasts of their homespun coats; but one or two had the air of educated men, though their keen faces showed traces of evil passions and evil habits. One old man—he must have been more than sixty—was well dressed in the unpretending garments of a respectable Western farmer, and his weather-beaten but mild face contrasted with the ferocity and recklessness of the countenances around him. The man with the high cracked voice, who wore a town-made suit of dilapidated broad-cloth, accosted this new comer as Mr. Stone, and asked if his wife intended to give the company any supper or not?

"The mississ is comin' in: you'd best ask her," said the old farmer, philosophically lighting his pipe. Mrs. Stone, a tall bony virago, here bustled forward to answer for herself, which she did by telling the hungry querist that he was "a greedy, cowardly, troublesome, turkey-buzzard of a Yankee, and that he had better have been helping to caché the horses and unload the boats, than calling for food as if he was in some fine city hotel."

While thus upbraiding the man in black—who indeed seemed to hold a very low position in the esteem of his comrades—Mrs. Stone bustled furiously to and fro, and before long a great frying-pan, full of pieces of pork, was sputtering on the fire, while several junks of beef and venison were broiling on impromptu spits made of ramrods stuck in the soft clay of the floor. Mrs. Stone was aided in these culinary processes by a pretty modest looking girl of eighteen, whose pale sad face looked out of keeping with the place and company, and whom I discovered to be her eldest daughter. A younger girl, about fourteen years of age, looked on from the outer circle. I no longer felt the slightest inclination to address the members of this group, and hardly knew in what light to consider them. I could form no guess as to their calling or object, but I instinctively cowered down among the branches and hid myself from observation. I felt that something was amiss, and that discovery might lead to awkward results. General Flint was asleep, but I feared that every moment he might awake and utter some exclamation, while it was always possible that his heavy breathing might draw the attention of some sharp-

cared member of the band. Some of the party had seated themselves on barrels or logs, with every sign of fatigue, but the rest stood watching the pork as it bubbled in the pan, and the steaks browning before the fierce fire. Several voices were speaking at once, and I only caught unconnected scraps of the talk.

"Jem Hudson was terrible riled. He set such a vally on that colt. If his gun hadn't had too much powder in it, this child would have been a gone coon, I guess."

"I think Hiram Stout's a deal uglier than Jem. He owes us a grudge, he does. I reckon Tennessee's gettin' too hot to hold us."

"Keep your opinion till it's axed for, green-horn," said the big man who had been addressed as captain, and who spoke in a tone of bullying authority. "This nigger don't need a Pennsylvania chicken to tell him when a melonsquash is squeezed dry."

"Here's your victuals ready, and no lady in Illinoy State could have fixed 'em better, nor yet slicker," exclaimed Mrs. Stone, in an argumentative manner, as if to challenge contradiction. But nobody picked up the gauntlet. A circle was formed, some walnut-wood platters and pewter pannikins were produced from a hiding-place, the company drew their bowie-knives, and Mrs. Stone carried round the frying-pan, in order that every one might help himself: while her two daughters followed, one with the steaks still stuck upon the iron-tipped ramrods, the other with some lumps of "corn-bread" in a basket.

It was at this moment that I felt my wrist cautiously grasped by a set of long lean fingers, and could hardly repress an exclamation, when, looking round, I saw that Jeremiah Flint was awake, and had risen to a kneeling position, keeping at the same time well behind the screen of brushwood.

"It's well I woke. We're in a fix, mister, we air." I looked round. I could see by the faint light that my companion's resolute face was very pale. "Very bad this—wuss than scalding water, mebbe; we've got into the den of a grizzly, mister; and if we carry our scalps out, we may be thankful a few."

I began to be seriously alarmed. I was yet in ignorance as to the true character of those on whose bounds we seemed to be unwitting trespassers, but I knew that Flint, who had spent years in the wild West, had a stout heart, and that his apprehensions were not likely to be roused without reason.

"I know more than one of 'em, Mr. Barham," whispered the general; "that tall fishrod of a man in the tail-coat, comes from Concord, Mass.: he was a regular penitentiary bird, he was. That German rogue in the cap, is Fritz Vogel, who was nigh hanged at Chicago last fall. And—may I never!—but that big chap in the red shirt—the captain—turns out to be Black Dave."

"Black Dave?"

"Ay, Black Dave, or David Jossam, the most e-tarnal thief! Famous for stealing horses,

coining bogus dollars, robbing stores, and breaking out of prison. Last time I saw him was at Little Rock, Arkansas, in the Supreme Court, under trial, and but for a rogue of a lawyer—"

Here my friend's reminiscences were cut short by the abrupt question, put by a gentleman whose mouth was very full, and who had a huge clasp-knife in one hand, and a pound or two of beef in the other: "Captain Dave, when are we to paddle over with them hosses?"

"We'll see about it," answered the chief. "Some one must go over to scout fust. I expect the brutes will be a nation deal safer when they git into Missouri, and out of sight of the river."

These words were a revelation. The general pressed my elbow. "They're horse-thieves, mister."

This announcement of the quality of our unconscious hosts was by no means calculated to dissipate my apprehensions. I listened, nervously enough, to an animated debate which now ensued among the members of the gang, as to the propriety of hurrying over the stolen horses to the Missouri shore, or of lying concealed for some days, until the first fury of the pursuers should be baffled and spent. Opinions varied. The only person of the male sex who took no part in the argument, was the old farmer-looking man whom I had heard addressed as Mr. Stone. He sat quiet, having finished his meal and resumed his pipe, and we could see nothing but his respectable-looking grey head, and the silvery wreaths from his soapstone meerschbaum, inasmuch as his face was towards the outer door. Mrs. Stone, his better-half, took an active part in council, urging a stay on the island, since there had been "nothing but scurrying here and stampedeing there for weeks, and her darters were worried and worn out with it." It was curious, but this notable woman's character appeared little if at all changed by lawless companionship and outlaw life. In the midst of robbers she was still the shrewish hard-working housewife, and I could see no remorse written on her parchment cheeks. With her daughters it was different. The eldest was evidently melancholy and ill at ease. She sat a little apart, never replied save with a monosyllable to any remark or rough compliment, and her downcast eyes and colourless face told of regrets and scruples that her mother did not share. The younger girl showed the same mental condition, but in a minor degree. Her answers were short, but pert, and she occasionally exploded into a giggle at some jocular sally of the Massachusetts man, or the German, who were the wits of the assembly. But one glance from her sister's sad dark eyes checked her rising spirits, and she subsided into gloom again. We listened with considerable interest to a discussion which materially affected our safety; but over which we could exercise no influence whatever. We gathered from the discourse that another hut existed, not far off, which was assigned to the Stone family, but that the rest of the association

had no residence on the island save the log-house in which we were concealed, and no couches but those heaps of brush and flowering grasses on which we were growing fearfully uneasy. The horses, we also learned, were hidden hard by, in a cache dug where the scrub grew thickest, and which was effectually masked from careless eyes by a sort of broad trap-door of osier work and sassafras boughs. Here it was customary to conceal them—they were all stolen from owners in Tennessee—until an opportunity occurred for transporting them to Bolivar or Greenville, in Missouri, where certain accomplices of the band resided, and whence they were sent to St. Louis, to be sold to emigrants bound for California.

Very unwillingly did we thus acquire possession of the secrets of those desperate men, every fresh admission or unguarded word serving to increase our danger, until at last we heard with dismay the final award of Black Dave, the captain.

"We'll jest stop. This location's good, and nobody knows of it [we trembled], and, as Marm Stone says, the gals are tired some, and we'd all be the better of rest. So we'll jest keep close for a few days, and then absquatulate with the hosses, and scurry for Bolivar."

There was a growl of assent, overtopped by the shrill voice of Mrs. Stone, who clamorously expressed her approval. I glanced at the general's face. It was white but firm; and the compressed lips and brightening eye told of a new resolve.

"It's a bitter pill, sir, 'tis, but we must gulp it," he whispered; "we must give ourselves up, and the sooner the better. It will go harder with us if we were found cacha'd than if we come out bold."

This was logical, but startling. I demurred for an instant, suggesting the possibility of our making our way out at the back of the cabin by cutting a hole with our knives in the comparatively thin roof. But our deliberations were unexpectedly cut short. Up to this time the party had contented themselves with eating and repose, but now a huge can of water and some lemons and sugar and some fresh sprigs of mint were produced, and a cry was set up for whisky.

"Where did you stow away the stone jars with the Monongahela, Marm Stone?"

Mrs. Stone replied that the jars were "under the brush of the beds," and bade the Massachusetts man fetch them. He rose at once, took up a pine torch, lighted it, and advanced. "Now," cried Jeremiah, rising to his feet; and we both stepped out into the lighted circle, causing the startled bearer of the torch to drop the blazing brand in his surprise.

"Dog-gone it all," yelled one of the gang, "the Philistines are on us!"

With wild shouts and curses, the ruffians scrambled up and clutched their weapons.

"Hurroo, boys, it's only two spy varmints!" thundered Black Dave, who was really a bold

villain; "kim back, you down-east coward, you! And you Dutch cur (for the Massachusetts man and the German were already in full retreat), they air but two, and without weapons."

When they were certain of this last reassuring fact, the more timorous of the robbers became almost beyond restraint in their blood-thirsty fury. Pistols and bowie-knives menaced us on every side, and it was with some trouble that the captain prevented our summary extermination. Black Dave, however, was firm. By his orders our wrists were tightly bound together with handkerchiefs, and we were placed in the centre of a circle of hostile faces and threatening revolvers, and bidden to confess.

"Speak up, ye skunks, who air ye?"

In answer to this query, the general gave a succinct and graphic account of the steam-boat accident, of our escape and immersion, of our landing on the island, and of how we happened to fall asleep in the log-house and become the involuntary auditors of the robbers' council, though this point was rather lightly touched upon. A bellow of fierce incredulity answered this statement.

"Cut out the lyin' snake's tongue!" bawled one.

"Murder 'em both, the oily spoken slippery-skinned Yankee eels," cried another, flourishing his glittering knife within an inch of my nose, while two pistol-barrels were pressed to the forehead of the unflinching Jeremiah.

"Hold a bit, gentlemen," said Black Dave.

"Out with the truth, ye skulking crawlers! Who sent you? Air ye State police, or mere informers? You, specially, with the Connecticut phiz and satin waistcoat. Hev'n't I seen your ugly features before? What's your name?"

"I dare say you have seen me before. I am General Jeremiah Flint, of New England, and I ain't ashamed of parentage nor raising," replied the general.

There was a murmur. Three or four of those present knew the general by repute or by sight. The Massachusetts man observed that "Flint was a hypocrite, that passed for doing things on the square." The German abused him for a "schelm," who had ill-treated an acquaintance of his at Memphis: which accusation afterwards resolved itself into the fact that Flint had broken the arm of a bully who tried to gouge him. Two other men had heard Flint was "a cute chap," and had been soft-hearted enough to help more than one person they had known, and who had been ruined and half-starved in the South.

All this time Black Dave, with an ominous frown on his dark brows, had stood toying with the lock of his revolver, making the hammer play up and down between his strong fingers, and tapping the bullets that lay in each charged chamber. Presently he fixed his keen eyes on the steady eyes of the principal captive. I say principal, because I attracted little or no attention, being quite unknown.

"Last time we met," said Dave, deliberately, "you and me, Jeremiah Flint, you sat on the

bench along with the sheriff and the squires, and I stood in the dock. Now times air altered. I am judge, now, and by all that's airthly, I'll hev justice. You say you're no spy. That mebbe true; but how if we let you go to the next town——"

"You'll never be such a 'tarnal fool, captain," said a bystander.

I took the opportunity of eagerly and solemnly assuring the outlaw that he had nothing to fear from our indiscretion. We would be silent, until silence could no longer be necessary.

"Shut your mouth, Britisher," said Dave, roughly, and instantly resumed. "Gineral, you must die. It goes agin me to kill in cold blood, but it's our law, and unless we'd all be strung up to trees by the Reg'lators of Tennessee, we must silence you for sartin." Dave lifted his pistol, and pointed it at the forehead of poor Flint, who gave a slight shudder, and then stood firm.

"I'll settle the other sneak," said a brawny boatman, cocking his revolver, and grasping my collar.

"I'll count twenty, slow," said Dave. "If you've got religion, you can mumble a prayer; and you, too, Britisher, for, when I get to twenty, I crook my claw."

The boatman's pistol was pressed to my ear. The muzzle felt icy cold, like the touch of Death's hand. My arms were bound, and all resistance impossible.

"One," began Dave.

The face of old Stone was contorted for a moment, as by a twinge of pain, and he let his pipe go out, unheeded, but said nothing. The girls were sobbing in a corner, and Mrs. Stone was apparently urging them, in a whisper, to withdraw.

The robber captain continued to count. "Two, three, four, five."

Such a scream! Mary Stone broke from her mother who sought to detain her, threw herself on her knees at Black Dave's feet, and began to beg our lives with an incoherent energy and a passionate sobbing and outpouring of words that it was painful to hear. This girl, usually so quiet and depressed, was now fully roused by the horror of the cruel deed about to be done. She wept and clung to Dave's brawny arm, and supplicated for mercy: mixing her entreaties with broken Scriptural phrases and incautious censures on the lawless life and pursuits of the band. But the chief, though startled, was not softened. He shook off the weak hands that grasped his.

"Marm Stone, take off your darter, and leave me to settle accounts with the spy. Men ain't to be twisted round, like milksops, by a useless screechin gal. You've made me lose my count, young one, but I'll pick it up by guess. Twelve!"

But scarcely had he levelled the weapon when Mrs. Stone advanced, and boldly beat it down.

"I've been a puzzlin' my brains," said the virago, "to recklect the man, and if he's him I think, he shan't die. None of your ugly frowns

at me, cap.; Bessy Stone's not the woman to be frit by black looks. Warn't you, Jeremiah Flint, once the actuary chap of the Boston Argus Life and Fire Company?"

"Yes, I was," said Flint.

"Of course!" sneered the German, maliciously.

"We'll prove that," returned Mrs. Stone. "'Tis long years ago, but can you remember going to a village, nigh Lexington, to see a farm-house and barns belonging to a farmer that had been burnt out, and the comp'ny suspected 'twar done a purpose, and were shy to pay the policy thing?"

"Stay a moment," said Flint, pondering; "the farmer's name was Burke, and the village was Brentsville, Mass."

"All right!" screamed the audacious virago, positively wrenching the revolver from between Dave's murderous fingers; "one good turn deserves as good, and as sure as my name's Bessy Stone, and was Bessy Burke, the man that saved my old dad from being ruined, root and branch, shan't be shot dog fashion—and you, Stone, if you're a man, you'll say so too."

The old farmer, who had evidently the highest reverence for his wife's judgment, rose from his seat, picked up the rifle that had lain beside him, and composedly sounded the barrel with the tough ramrod.

"The bit of lead's in its place!" he said, in his phlegmatic way, and stood still, but ready for action. A violent quarrel ensued; oaths, threats, and hard words were freely bandied to and fro; but four of the least villainous-looking of the gang took the side of mercy, and Mrs. Stone's dictum obviously carried great weight with it. Her bitter tongue and the masculine energy of her character, coupled with the respect habitually paid to females in America, had made her a potentate in the association: while her husband, though slow of wit, was known to be a brave man and a first-rate judge of a horse. The end of the matter was, that our lives were spared, but that it was decided that we should be kept prisoners until the evacuation of the island. We were accordingly placed in a sort of underground magazine, where forage was stored, and within a few inches of the pit in which the horses were concealed, and to which access was obtained by a drawbridge of stout planking.

Our bonds were slackened, but not removed, and we were made to give our parole not to attempt to escape until the horse-thieves should quit the island. Mrs. Stone, to whose capricious gratitude we owed our lives, was not unkind to us in her rugged way; and she and her daughters supplied us with food and blankets, and sometimes deigned to descend and converse with us, besides lending us one or two well-thumbed books, which constituted the family library. In the course of these conversations the apparent enigma of the connexion between the Stones, who seemed decent folks, and the utter villains who composed the gang, was solved. Old Stone had been a hard-working farmer in Illinois, illiterate, but respectable and honest

in deed and thought. Unluckily, he had invested his hard-earned savings and the price of his own farm in the purchase of a tempting bargain of landed property, with a fatal flaw in the title. The knavish vendor had fled, and the honest dupe, assailed by a lawsuit, had been stripped of all, and had found himself a beggar. Unhappily, Mrs. Stone was a woman of strong will, and a warped and one-sided judgment. She passionately declared that as the law had robbed them of their earnings, the law was their enemy, and a mere device for oppression. Anger blinded her; she was ashamed to live poor where she had been well to do, and in the cities of the South the exiled family soon picked up associates whose whole life was one war with society.

It was impossible to make Mrs. Stone comprehend that she was really a transgressor in sharing the perils and profits of wholesale plunder. She had got to regard all judges, governors, lawyers, and men of reputed honesty, as rogues, in league to pillage the simple; and she considered the work in which the horse-thieves were engaged as reprisals and warfare. Her husband, long used to obey the shrewd and violent woman who had attained such dominion over him, only saw through his wife's eyes. I believe the couple had some vague idea of buying land in Oregon or California, and setting up "on the square," when they should be rich enough—a hope which has lured on, many a half-reluctant criminal. The daughters, on the other hand, less prejudiced and better taught, since they had picked up some instruction in a tolerable school in Chicago, saw nothing but misery and degradation in the companionship to which they were condemned. They passed their lives in sighing over the old days and the innocence of their life in Illinois, and never willingly exchanged a word with the outlaws.

"I'll tell you what, Mr. Barham," said the general to me one day, "I'd like to give a lift out of the mire to them Stones. They've saved the lives of us both, for gospel truth, and my heart aches to think of their bein' caught one day, the old man hung, the woman locked up for life, and the daughters driven out to come to want, or worse. I'm not rich, no more, I suspect, air you; but land's not dear up in Oregon, nor yet in Californy, and between us we might buy 'em a farm, and let 'em live honest, and repent when grace was borne in upon 'em. A farm would be jest heaven to 'em, and three thousand dollars would buy and stock it in a small way."

I willingly agreed, and we quietly settled with Mary Stone, who was wild with joy at the idea, that a certain sum should be lodged, two months hence, in the Bolivar bank, in her name. She agreed that it was best to communicate this to her mother after the migration of the band. This was soon to occur. We had been prisoners for a fortnight, when one morning we were informed that a general flitting was at hand, and our release imminent.

With much snorting and trampling, the horses were led up from the cache, and embarked on

board two flat boats, which were to be towed across by two broadhorns, while a third followed with the rest of the party. Dawn was just breaking, no steamer was in sight, no wreath of filmy wood-smoke was on the horizon. Once on the Missouri bank, safety would be easily secured, since the depredations had been confined to Tennessee. We were allowed to come out of our prison, and found ourselves, blinking like owls in the daylight, on the margin of the turbid water. The first flat boat, full of horses, was towed off by a broadhorn pulling six cars. The two girls and their father were in the stern-sheets, but Mrs. Stone lingered, lest the German or Black Dave might do us, as she said, "a mischief at parting." But the captain was in good humour. He patted us on the back, laughing heartily, and advised us to "stick to Broadway pavement and Philadelphia park, onst we got there."

The last horses were embarked, and the rowers of the broadhorn settled themselves on the benches and grasped their oars. "All aboard, quick, boys!"

"Stay," said Black Dave, looking round, "where's that Massachusetts bird?"

Nobody knew. One said he was in the first boat. Another denied this. No one had seen him since the previous evening. Black Dave ground his teeth, and muttered a deep curse.

"He's deserted, the cur! To git the reward them Reg'lators offered!"

"He's stole the third broadhorn. It's gone!" cried a panting scout, running up. There was a moment of suspense, then a rush, and the remaining boat was so crowded that it was sunk gunwale deep in the water. The captain, rifle in hand, stood up in the stern-sheets.

"Pull, all! I hear the dip of oars!"

Flash! went the six oars into the water, and off went the heavily-laden boat, towing the flat with the horses. The progress was necessarily slow. But a few yards had been gained, before a loud outcry proved that the island was invaded. We were still standing on the shore, waving our hands to Mrs. Stone, whose hard face had relaxed into a smile, and who seemed heedless of the danger.

"Hurrah! Bang at 'em, boys—there the villains air!" bawled fifty voices, and a crowd of armed men in gaily fringed hunting-shirts or homespun suits, well armed, came at a run through the bushes. "Down!" cried Flint, throwing me to my knees and stooping himself, just in time to escape death, as the rifle-balls whizzed over us. I looked up. I saw Black Dave drop on his knees, fire his gun, rise again, stagger, and finally roll over into the river, mortally wounded by the discharge. No one else was hit. Cutting the tow-rope and crouching down as much as possible; the outlaws managed to escape further harm, and, abandoning their plunder, reached the Missouri shore.

We were at first roughly handled, and were even in some danger of being promptly hanged or

shot by order of Judge Lynch, when two witnesses to character came forward. One, on whom we looked with disgust, was the treacherous scoundrel who had betrayed the rest of the gang for gold; the other, wonder of wonders, was—Ned-Granger, who caught me in his arms and hugged me like a bear!

"Dear Ned, I thought you were dead."

"That's exactly what I thought of you, Barham, dear old boy, and of the general there. No, I was very little hurt, and was able to help the other uninjured passengers in caring for those poor creatures who were scalded or torn by the explosion. Every house is like a hospital. Ah! it was a shocking business. But though unhurt, you see, I had lost my luggage and money in the crash, and this honest farmer here has taken care of me these last weeks. So I came to help him to get back his stolen nags, little thinking whom I should find on Island Number Ten."

Flint and I kept our word with Mary Stone.

THE BEMOANED PAST.

WE have gone back in the world. The pre-Raphaelites say so. Antiquarians say so. The men who rank Gothic architecture among the moralities, and class a well-carved finial with a well fulfilled virtue, say so. So say the grumblers and the fault-finders, the pessimists and the unbelievers: the times of the San Graal and Sir Launcelot, of abbots of Crowland and monks of Hereford, were better than they are now, and humanity has slipped two steps back for every one taken in advance. Happening to think that the infallibility of the grumblers and the pre-Raphaelites just a trifle doubtful, and that the doctrine of Progress seems to me a hair's breadth nearer the truth, I will count up on my fingers the blessings which the past days had and those which they had not; and then we can strike the balance, and say which is best off, the San Graalites or ourselves.

To begin with, they had no books—no Subscription Circulating Libraries with rapid supply; no London Library, with graver reserve fund of acknowledged authorities; no British Museum, leviathan of its kind—nothing but a few manuscripts, hidden away in the conventional libraries, where dirty old monks, in horsehair shirts, passed their lives in transcribing volumes which we should run through in a week. To be sure, they put in some lovely bits of scroll-work down the sides and across the top, with impossible flowers and very often immodest adjuncts among the tracery; and they made little pictures as headings, very bright, and with the gold standing up well embossed—pictures where the heads were set on awry, and the hands held up in dislocation, with all the fingers glued together, and the palms as big as faces; and they dressed the apostles in the cloaks and jerkins of the period, and spoke of the Roman soldier who pierced the august side at the Crucifixion as "the knight who jousts with Jesus;" besides other pleasant

little anachronisms of the same kind, which were only rather stupid and ignorant. Then they despised the classics; not because they were written by men less advanced than themselves in the true knowledge of human life, but because they were written by dogs of unbelievers; and Disraeli tells a pleasant story of certain silent monks, who, when they went to the librarian to demand the loan of one of these heathen authors, made first the conventional sign that expressed a book, then scratched under the left ear like a dog, meaning thereby a book written by a dog of an unbeliever—as the dog Virgil or the hound Cicero; which was a modest manner with men who did not know the first elements of art or nature. It is often said by the lovers of the old time, that we owe to the monks all we have had preserved to us of the ancient authors, and that, had it not been for these same dirty old fellows in horsehair shirts, we should have lost every trace of the divines of heathendom. That may be, but on the other hand, owing to their superstition or ignorance, or, in some cases, dishonesty, we have lost much most valuable matter, for they knew the worth of books about as much as the Armenian monks of the present day, who put priceless tomes under their feet to protect them from the damp of the chapel floors, and have thus destroyed no end of literary treasure, because Eastern drainage is defective, and a set of lazy old fellows will not make footstools for themselves. So with the monks of former days here in England. If they preserved with the one hand, they ruined with the other; and had they had more books of their own they would have saved fewer of the heathens. I think, then, we have gone ahead in the matter of respect for literature.

Also in certain matters of religious taste and common sense. For instance, we have gone a step beyond the *Gesta Romanorum*. Even our Apocalyptic divines can do better than that; a step beyond Saint Francis of Assisi and his stigmata, at least among the educated and clear-headed; a step beyond Saint Ignatius and his dirt, his clotted hair and unpaired nails; beyond Thomas à Becket and his hair shirt swarming with vermin beneath his costly pontifical robes; indeed beyond all phases of dirt-deification under whatever saintly garb appearing; a step beyond Saint Philip Neri, whose ardent admiration of poverty was such, that he used to pray God he might be brought to want a penny and find no one to give it him. We have stepped, too, beyond belief in the value of ordeals and the likelihood of getting moral justice out of a hand-to-hand fight between two unequally matched combatants, the champion and the accuser; thinking that one or two solicitors, and half a dozen Q.C.s, with a jury of twelve sane men, and a bench of law lords, more likely machinery for eliminating the truth, than walking blindfold over burning ploughshares, or holding red-hot bars of iron in the naked hand, or thrusting the arms into a vessel of boiling oil, or the bleeding of the murdered body at the touch

of the murderer—all of which methods our dear old ancestors held of divine appointment to the ruling of justice. We have gone a step beyond the feudal suit and service of beating the waters round the castle all through the night to prevent the croaking of the frogs, that the lord might have undisturbed sleep and pleasant dreams; and beyond the tyrannous power which the law allowed to lord and lady over their servants or rather slaves. It was no unusual thing for these female slaves to be scourged to death by the order of their mistresses; and for offences which we should pass over in silence, or which the shrillest shrew among us would at most visit with only a moderate rebuke, they were scourged and fettered and tortured, with no more pity than is shown now by the Southern chivalry to the accursed sons of Ham. Wright, in his excellent *History of Domestic Manners and Sentiments*, tells the story of the servant of Teothic, the bell-maker of Winchester, who, for a "slight offence," was put in irons and chained up by the hands and feet all night. In the morning she was taken out and scourged, then fettered again as before; but the next night she escaped and took sanctuary at the tomb of Saint Swithen—the law affording her no other protection, and only the sanctuary of the church open to her, together with thieves and murderers and any other kind of malefactor. Another girl was half murdered by her master because, while washing linen at the river, she had been set on by thieves and robbed of her master's clothes. As he could not get at the thieves he punished the maid: which did quite as well. These are the knights and ladies whom it is the present fashion to speak of as just, true, and merciful.

Neither should we suffer now the once honoured institution of the feudal guardians, those "other fathers" who might marry off their wards when mere babes and sucklings—marry them, as they listed, to other babes and sucklings, or to old grey-bearded dotards tottering into the grave. If the poor wards did not take kindly to these arrangements when they grew up and had feelings and predilections of their own, then the guardians were allowed to exact from them the full value of the marriage forfeit. This was a rich source of speculation to many of those early guardians, and the source, too, of many of the deepest tragedies of the olden time. But women in those days of chivalry and knight-errantry were held no better than goods and chattels of rather a superior kind, and the feudal lord who was their husband was always more lord than husband, and could do with them as he liked.

But the banquets! Oh! those "feasts in hall and bower," where the chaste and loyal knights sit in their plumed helmets and glaring coats of mail, while blushing maidens hand round the wine-cup, and fair, pure, dove-like women sit meekly, scarce venturing to raise their drooping lids. Alas, they were rather different to what the illustrators of silly ballads and the mock worshippers of the olden

times would have us think. In the first place, no man ever left them sober. The drinking-horns and stemless cups which would not stand, and which had to be emptied, therefore, as soon as filled, were of themselves occasions sufficient for any amount of drunkenness, not to speak of the fashions of the time, which held it to be a mark of disrespect and effeminacy if a man did not drink himself into a beast, or if he withdrew from the table while he could stand. The worst crime charged against poor young Edwy was, that having a slight perception of refinement in his soul, and loving his wife better than his wine-cup, he used to leave his knights to brutalise themselves at their pleasure, while he went off to his young bride in her bower not yet quite unmanned.

From these vilely drunken orgies we have got the cant word "supernaculum." It was the fashion to turn up the glass after drinking, and drain it on the thumb—supernagulum—when, if the wine beaded into a drop of such size that it could not rest on the thumb but must fall off, the unhappy laggard was obliged to fill his cup again, and drink and drink till he had drained it so dry that he left nothing more than what could form a little bead supernagulum. These banquets usually ended in some outburst of violence, more or less brutal according to the stage of intoxication into which the guests had passed, and the amount of muscular force left in them, but rarely, if ever, passing off without a broken head or two, or a dagger sheathed in human flesh, if not some fouler murder, more treacherous and bloody than usual, and therefore attracting a little more historic notice. But no one cared much about a mischance of the kind, or, indeed, thought it worth notice, save in the case of some favourite of the chieftain, or the chieftain himself. Thus, when the outlaw Falk Fitz-Warine sent his friend and servant, John de Raunpaygne, disguised as a jongleur, to his great enemy Moris Fitz-Roger, to spy how things were going, and John de Raunpaygne struck a "wretched ribald on the head, so that his brain flew into the middle of the place," because, being very ill-favoured, he and other ribalds had plucked at the mock jongleur and scoffed at him, Moris Fitz-Roger took the thing very much as a matter of course, only swearing a great oath that, but for the news John had brought—which, by-the-by, was all false—he should have shared the same fate. Hard words break no bones, and John de Raunpaygne was quit with a scolding for the crime of having committed murder in the very presence of the lord and owner of that ribald chattel, only because he had been made game of for his natural as well as artificial ugliness. And how many stories are there of princes in the olden times being slain, either for hate or haste, at banquets where the general drunkenness allowed an enemy to steal in unperceived, or strike a blow unwarded? Those gay and festive halls were anything but gay and festive before the last dish was cleared away; only, indeed, the indifference to human life was such that a

murder more or less did not make much matter, provided no one of special consequence was slain. Minstrels singing obscene songs, jongleurs performing unseemly tricks, the grosser the better liked; glee maidens turning summersaults, heels over head, and no small thankfulness needed, if nothing worse, do not add much fascination to the picture, or give one a very favourable idea of the moral delicacy of the guests; while as for the rules of polite behaviour, "grammercy, fair sirs," they show little proficiency in that direction! I am almost ashamed to transcribe them, but that I wish the philo-chivalrists to learn what the Sir Launcelots and the Elaines actually were, and how they lived; leaving to them the task of measuring the distance between them, and the modern Otaheitans or North American Indians.

As they had no forks, but only their own knives or whingers, which they cleaned by passing under their thighs, one of the rules of good breeding enjoined on the guest was the necessity of cleaning his own knife under his own thigh, and not sticking it—or his knee—under his neighbour's. Also to the carver was delivered the golden rule, "Set never on fyshe, flesche, beeff, ne fowle, more than two fyngers and a thombe"—even the strong stomachs of the knights and ladies of the period not relishing the idea of eating their meat hot from the horny palm of the carver. They had no plates, save thick trenchers or slices of bread; therefore they ate what they wanted with their fingers, and threw the remainder on the floor—a convenient army of "ribalds," "letchers," and cats and dogs ever at hand to pick up the pieces. It was held bad breeding to play with the cats and dogs, and the guests were commanded to keep their hands clear of all contact under pain of being considered too Gorilla-like for good society (Wright quoting the Boke of Curtasye).

Whereso thou sitt at mete in borde (at table)
Avoide the cat at on bare werde,
For yf thou stroke cat other dogge,
Thou art lyke an ape teyghed with a clogge.

Also, the guest is advised to have clean hands and nails, and cautioned against spitting on the table, and against picking his teeth with a knife, a straw, a stick, or the tablecloth. But especially is he cautioned against using as his pocket handkerchief that hand with which he holds and tears his meat; and urgently advised, when he performs that sometimes necessary office, to wipe his hand immediately thereafter on his skirt or his cape:

Yf thy nose thou cense, as may befall,
Loke thy honde thou cense withalle,
Prively with skyrt do hit away,
Or ellis thurgh thi tetet that is so gay.

Will the next illustrator of the Idyls take this point of manners as one of the special marks of good breeding in the favourite knight, and show how it was his graceful method of manipulation with his skirt or his tippet that won Elaine's tender heart, and kept captive so long that of

stately Guinevre? contrasting, perhaps, an opposing coarseness of King Arthur's, who, as the elder man, could scarcely be expected to have come up to the degree of polish of the other, and who besides, as is often the case with the graver hero, might be considered as too thoughtful and preoccupied for the observance of such mere nothings as this. Oh, the truth of the past times, and the false colouring of romance, how different they are!

After the banquet, then, was finished, the fragments given to the beggars, the obscenity of the jongleurs brought to an end, the murdered men removed to be buried and no questions asked, and the wounded to be tended with such skill as the time afforded, the fair knights and ladies went to games. They were fond of chess and "tables" in those early days, but they could not play even at those quiet unexciting pastimes, in an ordinary Christian manner, but must needs make them occasions of quarrel and bloodshed—as indeed they made everything, no matter what. It is said that the feud between Charlemagne and Ogier le Danois began about a game of chess; and the story is this: During one of the Easter festivities at the court of Charlemagne, the Prince Charles, his son, and young Bauduin, an illegitimate son of Ogier the Dane, sat down to play at chess. Bauduin was the better player of the two, and after a time pressed young Charles up into a corner and gave him a comfortable mate. Charles was furious at his defeat, and "not content with treating the son of Ogier with the most insulting language, he seized the chess-board in his two hands, and struck him so violent a blow on the forehead that he split his head and scattered his brains over the floor." Whence ensued, says the romance, the famous quarrel between Charlemagne and Ogier: and whether that authority is true or not true, the anecdote at least proves the thing possible. The cause, too, of the long-continued feud between King John and our old friend Fulk Fitz-Warine, if not brought about, was partly caused and much aggravated by a game of chess. Fulk was brought up at the court of Henry II., bred with his four sons, and much beloved by them all save John; and he and John were ever at deadly war, with only the ends and tags of a hollow truce to keep them straight. Now, "it happened that John and Fulk were sitting all alone in a chamber playing at chess; John took the chess-board and struck Fulk a great blow. Fulk felt himself hurt, raised his foot, and struck John in the middle of the stomach, that his head went against the wall, and he became all weak and fainted. Fulk was in consternation, but he was glad that there was nobody in the chamber but they two, and he rubbed John's ears, who recovered from his fainting-fit, and went to the king his father, and made a great complaint. 'Hold your tongue, wretch,' said the king, 'you are always quarrelling. If Fulk did anything but good to you, it must have been by your own desert;' and he called his master, and made him beat him finely and

well for complaining." So cowardly John took nothing by his move then; but when he came to the throne, he remembered his old grudge and the chess-table, and Fitz-Warine was an outlaw for many a long year in revenge of that day.

Another pleasant habit they had, was sleeping without night-clothes; half a dozen or more in the same room without regard to sex. Very little privacy was there in those crowded bed-chambers; in hostels, in homes, in palaces, strange people seem to have walked in and out those big menageries, inspecting the naked human animals beneath their coverlets, the hawks on the perches over head, and the clothes of the company dangling from long poles thrust in the wall, pretty much as they liked. Even in the king's chamber Dunstan, unbidden, walked up to the bed where lay Edgar and his too lovely wife—the Mrs. Bathsheba of the chronicles—and scolded them both in full prelatial style for their sins; the guilty monarch and his frail wife having to bear it as they best might. In those same bedrooms, too, were helpless new-born babes delivered over to the tender mercies of a set of ignorant women, who swathed and swaddled them out of all likeness to anything human, often making them mere crooked abortions, hump-backed and crippled; sometimes, indeed, swaddling them out of life altogether, because they were afraid to trust to nature, and thought their own stupid superstitions the better guide.

Then to think of what other parts of the life were like—to run over the filth, and coarseness, and discomfort, and ignorance that pervaded society from end to end—from the king on his throne to the churl in his sty—and to hear those times idealised, and their braver lessons regretted! The undrained houses, so badly built that they kept out neither foe nor weather; excepting, indeed, the big lord's castles, which were massive enough, but which were fortresses rather than dwelling-houses; and so poorly furnished, for fear of thieves and plunderers, that nothing movable of any value was to be seen in them; and the floors—the rush-covered floors!—"Strew, oh strew my bed with rushes, here I'll stay till morning blushes," sounding very well in rhyme and set to music, but the reality of the most filthy and indescribable nastiness. No wonder that the plague, and the black death, and half a hundred other frightful diseases, decimated Christendom every summer, and attested the need of cleanliness by the majesty of natural laws! no wonder that, with a perpetual diet of salt meat and bacon, with black bread and no fresh vegetables, no salads, no potatoes, no green peas, no early Brussels sprouts, no spinage, no asparagus, nothing but salt meat and bacon, just like the savages' "biltongue" and "pemmican," no wonder that scrofula and madness broke out in every possible form, and that strong men and women were hurried to their graves by scores, where now they drop leisurely by units. And when we come to their medicines—the arts they employed to counteract all this abomination—

their incessant bleedings for all ailments, with the more solemn remedy of charms and sacred words written on holy scraps of paper in the room of our pretty little globules, or more majestic and material rhubarb pills—what chance did there seem for the ultimate salvation of those benighted children of the past? Talk of the decay of the present—yes, about as much decay as goes to ripen an orchard or to make a man out of a child!

There were no inns of any decent character or behaviour, and the man who set forth on a journey must expect to be robbed half a dozen times and killed at least twice before he got to the end of his pilgrimage. Then, too, though there were no fashion-books and no crinoline, the modes were just as preposterous as at the present time, with the disadvantage of clerical interference perpetually occurring. And as the clergy made a good thing by moral crimes—the more crimes the better the trade for them—they contrived that everything should be a crime, for the compromising of which they would get compensation. Long dresses in men were moral crimes; and long sleeves, long trains—on which one enthusiastic preacher declared he saw a little imp, all black and sooty, sit, as on a cushion—and long liriipes in women were moral crimes. It was a moral crime to know a little more than one's neighbour, and a crime, too, that often brought one to the scaffold, or the stake; a crime to be fond of certain animals, and a greater crime to be skilful in taming them; a crime to be hysterical, epileptic, or "sensitive;" a crime to think for oneself, to act for oneself, or to question the absolute and irresponsible power of the feudal lord; a crime to love science, or to know one single event of nature not patent to the wits of the gentlemen who drank on the nail and broke "cockcombs" in the hall: it was a crime to love where forbidden by the lord or suzerain, and a crime to refuse to love when commanded by the lord or suzerain; it was a crime to think white white, or black black, if told to call them blue or grey, and if acting therefore on one's own unlicensed and independent judgment; a crime to assert one's own manhood, to defend one's honour, to deny one's person to the strongest hand, to declare the equality of all men by any practical proof on one's own side, or to make independent use of any gift of reason or perception which God had given one.

Yet though we have risen, slowly, painfully, and with many a hard struggle, out of all this social degradation and ignorance, though we have set our feet steadily, and ever advancing, on the heights of the better places, there are yet men so ungrateful to their blessings, or so ignorant of truth, who look back to all this blind and brutal past with an admiration they will not grant to the present, and regret even its brutality for sake of the fuller flavour of animal life about it. The false glitter of romance has gilded many a falsehood in this world; it has created none greater than that which ascribes more vir-

tues to the past than to the present, and which denies the truth of the glorious doctrine of the infinite and enduring progress of humanity.

ITALIAN NIGHTMARES.

SHARP-SIGHTED naturalists have discovered a family of creatures, the constitution of whose members is peculiar. The several and sundry species of *Actinophrys*, *Arcella*, and *Gnomia*, are furnished with arms—or "pseudopodia," to show our learning—which are not invested by any limiting membrane like our skin, but which coalesce with each other and completely unite, whenever they put themselves into actual contact. If two or more limbs happen to come together, a thorough fusion of their substance takes place. Many little limbs will make one stout limb; several limbs will drop their individuality and agglutinate their mass into one simple body. The remarkable fact has likewise been noticed, that two perfectly distinct individuals became gradually fused so as to form one large single animal. Moreover, in most of these creatures, there is visible, somewhere towards the centre, an uncertain-shaped empty space, also learnedly called a "vacuole" (likewise a "contractile vesicle"), whose use is undemonstrated, except it be to serve as a paunch for the reception of heterogeneous matters.

A race of men, known as Italians, are of similar habits. The family is distinct enough, with natural characteristics and boundaries; it has considerable talent, great personal advantages, a language derived from a common Latin root; a country walled in by enormous mountains at top, bathed by the sea throughout the rest of its boundary, and planted within a ring fence such as few landowners can emulate. In spite of which, for ages past, it has been dismembered and chopped up into portions, each moved by a separate directing power and groping in the dark after whims of its own. The oldest member of Europe as a civilised country, it is the youngest as an united community. Towards its centre, there has long existed, and still exists, a large vacuole, called Rome, full of mysteries and monstrosities, a receptacle for things cast out from other bodies politic, in which all sorts of scum and offal undergo the fermentation of putrefaction, not unfrequently running over. Of late, however, the "vacuole" has assumed the character of a "contracting vesicle;" and the race of men to whom we allude are even hoping that, as far as its present constitution is concerned, it may speedily contract into nothingness.

An eminent experimentalist in governmental science (whom we refrain from naming), who is not afraid of a severe operation if need be, recently tried the effect of raising the barrier between two contiguous members of this disunited body. The result surpassed his expectation, perhaps even exceeded his wish. Not only did a portion of Lombardy amalgamate at once with Piedmont, but Parma, Modena,

and Tuscany, spontaneously melted into one, like kindred drops, in spite of diplomatic mountains interposed, that had been artificially raised at Villafranca and Zurich. It was a decisive experiment, which there was no gainsaying. No Talicotian junction of parts, no horticultural cleft-grafting, or cunning inarching, ever effected an union like this. The example spread; the size of the pontifical vacuole was considerably diminished; its outskirts melted away to join the rest; every cupful of surplus water took one direction towards the river. The contracting vesicle, maintained in existence by the great practitioner's perseverance, and also by his purse, pulsed and palpitated, as it palpitated still, to little (temporarily) except mischievous purposes.

When once a powerful action has set in, no practitioner can say where it will end. As electrical disturbances of the atmosphere *will* display their freaks of repulsion and attraction, so will agitations of the ether or fluid which pervades the whole popular body of a nation. Insulated Sicily shot forth sparks which manifested not merely its sympathetic adhesion to Italy, but which set light to and kindled a pervading fire throughout the whole Neapolitan continent. Naples would no longer remain a portion of a non-existent theoretical Italy; it would be one with it actually, for weal or woe, for war or peace, for commercial prosperity or necessary taxation. Naples, after incomprehensible difficulties, raised by the policy of the friendly experimentalist, at last got rid of the wretched Bourbon who wanted the Two Sicilies for himself alone.

For Naples at least there seemed to be hope. Immediately on leaving the Papal States a difference is visible in the face of the country, and in the appearance and habits of the people. The land is drained and cultivated, producing corn and wine. The inhabitants are industrious, and all employed in some little handiwork: in making mats or coarse pottery, in spinning and weaving. Even children and old folk are brought into play; nor are their faces discoloured by malaria, like that which broods over the Pontine Marshes, over the patrimony of the Piuses, Innocents, and Benedicts. The titles of the pontiffs promise well, for when a new pope chooses a name after his election he may as well choose a good one. A Pope Maledict may be an acknowledged fact, but a foreign garrison prevents its being a public title.

Poor Naples! On regarding her closely, one pities her as one would pity a beautiful human form from which some magician had stolen the soul for his own egotistical purposes. What the few may be, is of little import; the people, the great bulk of the nation, have been practically taught, both by their priests and rulers, that moral and intellectual qualities are of little value. "Eat and drink, for to-morrow you die. Steal and lie; be immoral, and trade in immorality; but taste no meat (except otter and wild-fowl, which are not meat, but only coagulated water) on Fridays and fast days; and doubt not the

liquefaction of dead St. Januarius's blood, nor the miraculous effects of saintly relics. The former peccadilloes may be wiped away by the sponge of absolution and plenary indulgence; the latter sins you shall expiate in the fire of Vesuvius ten times heated during a purgatory of a thousand years. Do you doubt it? Look at the pictures of souls in torment painted on the walls of your village. Lead as pleasant a life as you can; in other respects, if you are obedient to us, we undertake to conduct you to heaven. But dare to think and reason, and use your own judgment, and you see *there* depicted, what punishment awaits you."

The rulers of the vacuole and their friends the former rulers of Naples would keep all men's minds empty of all lay and mundane knowledge, filling them instead with superstitions, animal appetences, and outward devotional forms. The lights which direct fishermen to steer home by night, must be suspended from a cross, and not from a vulgar pillar or post. It is a good work, during Lent, to dress up little dolls of the Virgin in mourning, and hang them about the streets. In one village, you will see, painted on *every* house, a little tablet containing the words "Viva il Sangue di Gesù Cristo." Any individual who should neglect or refuse to affix this talisman to his habitation, would be expelled the community as an atheist ripe for volcanic fires.

Of course, to a populace so misinstructed, money is the greatest earthly good. The propensity to grasp, is manifested in a way calculated to give the traveller a very unfavourable impression of the national honour and integrity. A French peasant may be avaricious, but he is not offensively grasping and greedy; he pinches *himself*, and saves and hoards. The great majority of French beggars beg to get bread and nothing else. There is a proverb, "No money, no Swiss," which is just as true of the Swiss, and no more, as it is of any other European nation; and for your money, you have the service of your Swiss, honestly and pleasantly rendered. True; a Swiss loves money, but not dishonourably, inordinately, nor offensively; he will fulfil his bargain thoroughly and cheerfully, and receive the payment agreed upon, with contented acknowledgments. He is frugal of his own indulgences, and economises against a rainy day, or to found a little capital which will help him to establish himself in life. The Italian of the humbler class is often spendthrift and self-indulgent, while, at the same time, he begs open-mouthed and open-handed for every little coin he can get. Certainly, he is often very poor; but it is a great defect (to be cured only by increasing his self-respect and the sense of his own dignity as a man) that, in his intercourse with strangers, he is apt to be *never* satisfied. Give him his just due, he will entreat for more; pay him more than his due, treat him with generosity, he will still assume an air of discontent and ask for more. "Why more? You are handsomely remunerated as it is." "Just a little more, eccellenza—only per

la grazia;" which can hardly be translated by words that have meaning. Give a beggar-boy a Paul; by way of thanks, he will pester you for just one bajocco more.

The truth is, that an Italian, and more especially a Neapolitan, needs cash more for his indulgences than for his necessities. Even among the higher classes, it would be difficult to restrain the passion for the opera—often, really, so second rate that it is a hard task to sit it out; and it seems likewise that there are certain pleasures which a Neapolitan of the lower orders will not do without. He *must* play cards; he *must* see Punch; he *must* idle and lounge about; he *must* squeeze into one or several of the numberless "teatri di giorno" or day theatres; he *must* hear story-tellers and reciters; he *must* eat ices and drink iced-water; he *must* occasionally drive in a calash; and, though he may be in a position to procure with ease the necessities of life, these luxuries cost money. As to the means of obtaining the required supply, his conscience is very accommodating. Perhaps those are the honestest set who take to mendicancy to increase their revenues. The very act of beggary serves to display the great capabilities of this curious and interesting people.

The beggars of Naples, both the really necessitous and those who beg for the sake of pocket-money, are very ingenious as well as persevering. They have plenty of talk and argument. With some, it is a favourite plan to pretend to be dumb, and to make all sorts of hideous inarticulate noises. Others, acting the idiot, will throw a beautiful vacancy into their countenances, use unmeaning gestures, and talk nonsense. They are not without occasional touches of eloquence. If you give nothing, and walk away, you will perhaps hear a long-drawn sigh, followed by an audible half-aside ejaculation, "Che cuore duro!" ("What a hard heart!") Or, "Santa Maria, sono abbandonato da tutti." ("Holy Maria, I am deserted by all.") Another will plead, "Sono poverello miserabile; bisogna appoggiarmi. Ecco il pane; andiamo, compriamo." ("I am a poor dear miserable man, and I must be supported. There is bread; let us go and buy some.") If you are followed more closely than is pleasant, try the experiment of accosting a soldier under the pretence of asking your way; your attendant will vanish speedily, probably through the force of police recollections. In the Villa Reale there used to be an old fisherman with his son, who picked up a good many little coins by exhibiting in a bottle of seawater the small fish (Pipefish, *syngnathus*) which they call "cavallo di mare," or sea-horse. If you declined looking, or did not give, the old man would present the boy, and say, "Almexo che il piccolo vi bacia la mano." ("At least let the little one kiss your hand.")

A certain force and aptness of expression seem innate with the Neapolitans. A hackney-coachman, instead of calling your attention by the cold method of "Cab, sir; cab!" or its equi-

valent, says boldly "Andiamo!" ("Let us be off!") and suits the action to the word, by making his carriage advance a yard or two, as if there were no means of avoiding the bargain. As macaroni is a principal article of food at Naples, the word macaroni, by the process of metonymy, is made to signify wages or drink money. Thus a handsome present is called a *good macaroni*, and men expecting to be well paid for a day's work would say, "We shall eat long macaroni to-night." However light your luggage may be, a facchino, or porter, will groan on shouldering it, as if it were extremely heavy, in the hope of increasing his reward.

Poor Naples! With a soil and climate ready to produce almost anything, from utilitarian wheat and hemp to luxurious fruit and luscious wines; with inexhaustible mineral treasures; with fine harbours, and with water carriage around seven-eighths of its circumference; it obtains for itself only a fraction of what it might, and forgets that, while enriching the world, it would increase its own store of riches. But how should there be commercial enterprise or road-making, when thousands of monks give the practical lesson that it is better to beg than to work? How should population be as numerous as it ought, when ten thousands of persons of both sexes are shut up in enforced celibacy? How should there be advanced agriculture or skilful pasturage, when the countryman is taught that sufficient for the day is the food thereof? To do a short task that will buy a meal, to sleep in the sun, to fight for the odious Bourbon if there be a row in the city, has long been considered the whole duty of Neapolitan man. To learn to read, is to expose one's soul to danger, besides being an unnecessary toil and vexation; to learn to write is needless, while you can get a letter written for you on payment of a few small copper coins.

And yet, in spite of all this, Naples has been electrified into life. She would fain realise a resurrection from ignorance and indolence; she would gladly blend with the people of the north and follow the guidance of Victor Emmanuel. But the scarlet spiders nestled in the vacuole, demur. They are too fond of cobwebs that catch human prey, to let their nets be swept away without resistance. No better means occur to them than to recruit bands of butchers to murder the sheep who refuse the Bourbon as their shepherd.

Cardinal Antonelli's speech: "We don't look at things from the same point of view as you do," fully explains the condition of things in the Roman and the Neapolitan States. A child is more easily governed than a man; therefore men are to be kept intellectually children for the whole term of their lives. A priest teaches all they need to know; therefore, one of the rarest creatures in Italy is a good and capable schoolmaster. A schoolmaster would be an instigator of inquiry, of private judgment, of heresy, of rebellion against the Church. A series of "object lessons," followed by popular lectures on physical science, would put an end to the shedding of

tears and blood by wooden Madonnas, and to all the rest of the modern miracles necessary to good government. Self-government, representative government, constitutional government, education, are things unseen, and not wished to be seen, from the pontifical point of view. Highways and railroads would increase communication, communication would be sure to introduce inconvenient untoward insubordinate ideas. Commerce might raise up a laity of shipowners and merchant princes; improved agriculture might found a landed lay aristocracy, and a middle class of farmers, with views diametrically opposed to those of their clerical governors. Therefore the governments of the cardinals and the Bourbon want neither highways, nor railroads, nor shipping, nor intercourse with foreign ports, nor the draining of the Pontine Marshes, nor the cultivation of the desert Campagna.

The reasons put forth to prove that Italy can never become a national unity, are amusing; because they are equally valid to prove that France, in her present state, is a paradox, and the United Kingdom an impossibility. For the same reasons the kings of Navarre and the dukes of Burgundy ought now to be holding divided sway with the hero of the second Empire; and even if the heptarchy be regarded as obsolete, at least Scotland ought to retain a reigning dynasty, and Wales to be governed by a prince bound by no duty to Queen Victoria. Italy cannot be one, we are told, because the Sicilies are jealous of Piedmont, because Florence and Genoa are ancient rivals, because Tuscans will never give the hand of fellowship to Lombards, Romans, and Modenese. Ergo, the strife between Highlander and Lowlander, the sneers at Taffy and his cheeses, at Caledonia and her cremona, at Irish bulls and Irish brogue, are imaginary episodes of British history.

Again: Italy can never become a whole, we are told, because distinct dialects are spoken in her different provinces. The Italian of Piedmont is far from pure, so is the Italian of Naples; moreover, the two impurities are unintelligible the one to the other. Then, Venice liquefies everything into vowels, substituting "Siora mare" and "Fia mia" for "Signora madre" and "Figlia mia." Tuscany delights to roughen with guttural aspirates, changing "acqua calda" into "achequa halda." Genoa chooses to call her self "Zenna" (as English babies prefer Totsy and Mopsy to the names given by their godfathers and godmothers), and alters the village Cocolletto (the birthplace of Columbus) into the more mellifluous "Coco-oio." All the principal streets of Milan are "Corsi," the second-rate "Contrade;" the word "Strada" is nowhere to be heard or seen. For—further reason for disunion—the Italians introduce the peculiarities of their dialect into the orthography of their language; the Italian dialects are not reckoned vulgar; they have their

glossaries and their literature; they are perpetuated in print and recognised in good society.

But what are the discrepancies of the Italian dialects, compared with the distinctness of the English and the Gaelic languages: including in the latter its branches, Irish, Cornish, and Welsh? Or of the Breton, Alsatian, and French? Drop a Northumberland peasant, with his "burr" in his throat, into the lanes of Norfolk or Suffolk, and he will be as unintelligible to his fellow-subjects there, as a Venetian suddenly transferred to a Tuscan village. Introduce a Marseillois to a native Picard, and they will mutually deride each other's patois with a contempt equal to that which a Milanese would bestow on a Sicilian. But the proverb, "Lingua Toscana nella bocca Romana," "Tuscan language with the Roman pronunciation," proves the existence of a strong connecting link; and it is neither domestic internal jealousy, nor the differences of dialects, which will prevent Italian unity, any more than exactly like facts were able to prevent British unity or Gallic unity. If Italy can set about her unification with the same energy, scorn of superstition, and self-respect, which made France a grande nation and Great Britain rather far from a little one, she may achieve the same result.

Also, there is a unity of faults and failings that must be got rid of—idleness, ignorance, religious bigotry, mean importunity, discontent with fair remuneration for small services rendered to strangers. In most of these points, Italy may learn a good lesson from her neighbour Switzerland. Whenever anything like a Reformation can be prepared in Italy, it will be a day of bright promise for the whole peninsula. The general instruction of the people is a matter of primary necessity, rivalling in its importance the material improvement of the country. Prizes might be advantageously offered for the importation, or rearing, of a race of schoolmasters. Lay teachers endowed with common sense, are the beings whose acclimation would render an enormous service. For, in the words of her great champion, "Had Italy been better instructed, she would, long before this, have known that her boundary was not the wall of a town or the hedge of a garden, but the high Alps and the broad sea."

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